

J567-1
Jerrold V.1
History of St. Giles
and St. James

Acc. No. 50480

J567-1 V.1

Keep Your Card in This Pocket

Books will be issued only on presentation of proper library cards.

Unless labeled otherwise, books may be retained for four weeks. Borrowers finding books marked, defaced or mutilated are expected to report same at library desk; otherwise the last borrower will be held responsible for all imperfections discovered.

The card holder is responsible for all books drawn on this card.

Penalty for over-due books 2c a day plus cost of notices.

Lost cards and change of residence must be reported promptly.



Public Library
Kansas City, Mo.

Keep Your Card in This Pocket

THE HISTORY
OF
ST. GILES AND ST. JAMES.

BY
DOUGLAS JERROLD.

COPYRIGHT EDITION.

IN TWO VOLUMES.
VOL. I.

LEIPZIG
BERNHARD TAUCHNITZ
1852.

J567-1

8.

v.1

50488

E

7068

SIND. Oc 1937

P R E F A C E.

DURING the progress of the original publication of "St. Giles and St. James" — which it is hoped is rendered somewhat less faulty in the present revised edition — certain critics would charge the writer with a cleaving desire to despoil the high for the profit of the low; with a besetting tendency to mum as a sort of moral Robin Hood, stripping the rich of their virtues that only the veriest poor might strut in the plunder. In reply to this, I will content myself with saying that I somewhat confidently await the verdict of a different opinion from the reader who may honour these pages with a dispassionate persual.

It has been my endeavour to show in the person of St. Giles the victim of an ignorant disregard of the social claims of the poor upon the rich; of the governed million upon the governing few; to present — I am well aware how imperfectly; but with no wilful exaggeration of the portraiture — the picture of the infant pauper reared in brutish ignorance; a human waif of dirt and darkness. Since the original appearance of this story, the reality of this picture, in all its vital and appalling horror, has forced itself upon the legislature; has engaged its anxious thoughts; and will ultimately triumph in its humanising sympathies. I will

thousand, thousand starving creatures: in his very tenderness for misery, tests his privilege of exemption from a woe that withers manhood in man, bowing him downward to the brute. And so questioned, this man gives in modesty of spirit — in very thankfulness of soul. His alms are not cold, formal charities; but reverent sacrifices to his suffering brother.

It was a time when selfishness hugs itself in its own warmth; with no other thoughts than of its pleasant possessions; all made pleasanter, sweeter, by the desolation around. When the mere worldling rejoices the more in his warm chamber, because it is so bitter cold without; when he eats and drinks with whetted appetite, because he hears of destitution, prowling like a wolf around his well-barred house; when, in fine, he bears his every comfort about him with the pride of a conqueror. A time when such a man sees in the misery of his fellow-beings nothing save his own victory of fortune — his own successes in a suffering world. To such a man the poor are but the tattered slaves that grace his triumph.

It was a time, too, when human nature often shows its true divinity, and with misery like a garment clinging to it, forgets its wretchedness in sympathy with suffering. A time, when in the cellars and garrets of the poor are acted scenes which make the noblest heroism of life; which prove the immortal texture of the human heart not wholly seared by the branding-iron of the torturing hours. A time when in want, in anguish, in throes of mortal agony, some seed is sown that bears a flower in heaven.

Such was the time, the hour approaching midnight.

when a woman sat on a door-step in a London street. Was she sleeping, or was she another victim of the icy season? Her head had fallen backward against the door, and her face shone like a white stone in the moonlight. There was a terrible history in that face; cut and lined as it was by the twin-workers, vice and misery. Her temples were sunken; her brow wrinkled and pinched; and her thin, jagged mouth, in its stony silence, breathed a frightful eloquence. It was a hard mystery to work out, to look upon that face, and try to see it in its babyhood. Could it be thought that that woman was once a child?

Still she was motionless — breathless. And now, a quick, tripping footstep sounds in the deserted street; and a woman, thinly, poorly clad, but clean and neat withal, approaches the door. She is humming a tune, a blithe defiance to the season, and her manner is of one hastening homeward. "Good God! if it isn't a corpse!" she cried, standing suddenly fixed before what seemed, in truth, the effigy of death. In a moment, recovering herself, she stooped towards the sitter, and gently shook her. "Stonecold — frozen! Lord in heaven! that his creatures should perish in the street!" And then the woman, with a piercing shriek, called the watch; but the watch, true to its reputation for sound substantial sleep, answered not. "Watch — watch!" screamed the woman with increasing shrillness; but the howling of the midnight wind was the only response. A moment she paused; then looked at what she deemed the dead; and flinging her arms about her, flew back along the path she had trod. With scarcely breath to do common credit to her powers of scolding, she drew up at a watch-box,

and addressed herself to the peaceful man within. "Why, watch — here! a pretty fellow! — people pay rates, and — watch, watch! — there's a dead woman — dead, I tell you — watch — pay rates, and are let to die, and — watch — watch — watch!" And still she screamed, and at length, clawed at and shook the modest wooden tenement which, in those happy but not distant days of England, sheltered many of England's civil guardians.

The watchman was coiled up for unbroken repose. He had evidently settled the matter with himself to sleep until called to breakfast by the tradesman who, at the corner post, spread his hospitable table for the early wayfarers who loved saloop. Besides, the watchman was at least sixty-five years old; twenty years he had been guardian of the public peace, and he knew — no one better — that on such a night even robbery would take a holiday, forgetting the cares and profits of business in comfortable blankets. At length, but slowly, did the watchman answer the summons. He gradually uncoiled himself; and whilst the woman's tongue rang — rang like a bell — he calmly pushed up his hat, and opening his two small, swinish eyes, looked at the intruder.

"Well! after that I hope you are awake — and after that —"

"What's the matter?" asked the watchman, feeling that the hour of saloop was not arrived, and surlily shaking himself at the disappointment, "What's the matter?"

"The matter! Poppy-head!"

"Any of your bad language, and I shall lock you

up." And this the watchman said with quite the air of a man who keeps his word.

"There's a woman froze to death," cried the disturber of the watchman's peace.

"That was last night," said the watchman.

"I tell you, to-night, man — to-night. She's on a door-step; there" — and the woman pointed down the street. "I should like to know what we pay you watchmen for, if poor creatures are to drop down dead with cold on the highway."

The watchman lifted his lantern to the face of the speaker — it was a frank, lively, good-humoured face, with about five-and-thirty years lightly laid upon it — and closing one eye, as if the act gave peculiar significance to what he said, slowly observed, syllable by syllable, "Any more of your imperance, and" — here he took an oath, confirming it with a smart blow of his stick upon the pavement, "and I'll lock you up." The woman made some answer; but the words were lost, ground by the watchman's rattle, which he whirled about. As cricket answers cricket, the rattle found a response. Along the street the sound was caught up, prolonged, and carried forward; and small bye-lanes gave forth a wooden voice — a voice that cried to all the astounded streets, "Justice is awake!" And then lantern after lantern glimmered in the night: one lantern advancing with a sober, a considerate pace; another, with a sort of flutter; another, dancing like a jack-o'-lantern over the snow. And so, lantern after lantern, with watchmen behind, came and clustered about the box of him, who was on the instant greeted as Drizzle.

"What's the row?" cried an Irishman — a young

fellow of about sixty, who flourished his stick, and stamped upon the pavement, like indignant virtue, impatient of a wrong. "What's the row? Is it her?" and he was about to lay his civil hand upon the woman.

Every watchman asked his separate question; it seemed to be his separate right: and Drizzle, as though respecting the privilege of his brethren, heard them all — yes, every one — before he answered. He then replied, very measuredly — "A woman is froze to death."

"What! agin?" cried two or three.

"Agin," answered Drizzle. Then turning himself round, he headed the watch; and motioning to the woman to show the way, he slowly led his fellows down the street. In due time, they arrived at the spot.

"Froze to death?" cried Drizzle doubtingly, holding his lantern to the bloodless, rigid features of the miserable outcast.

"Froze to death?" asked every other watchman, on taking a like survey.

"No, — no; not dead! Thank God! not dead," exclaimed the woman, stooping towards her wretched sister. "Her heart beats — I *think* it beats."

"Werry drunk; but not a bit dead," said Drizzle: and his brethren — one and all — murmured.

"Well! what are you going to do with her?" asked the woman, vehemently.

"What should we do with her?" cried Drizzle. "She isn't dead, and she isn't a breaking the peace."

"But she will be dead, if she's left here, and so I desire" —

"You desire!" said Drizzle, "and after all, what's your name, and where do you come from?"

"My name's Mrs. Aniseed, I live in Short's Gardens — and I come from — the Lord ha' mercy! what's that?" she cried, as something stirred beneath the ends of the woman's shawl, that lay upon her lap. With the words, Mrs. Aniseed plucked the shawl aside, and discovered a sleeping infant. "What a heavenly babe!" she cried: and, truly, the child in its marble whiteness looked beautiful; a lovely human bud, — a sweet, unsullied sojourner of earth, cradled on the knees of misery and vice.

For an instant, the watchmen in silence gazed upon the babe. Even their natures, hardened in scenes of crime and destitution, were touched by the appealing innocence of the child. "Poor little heart!" said one. "God help it!" cried another.

Yes; God help it! And with such easy adjuration do we leave thousands and tens of thousands of human souls to want and ignorance; doom them, when yet sleeping the sleep of guiltlessness, to future devils — their own unguided passions. We make them outcasts, wretches; and then punish, in their wickedness, our own selfishness — our own neglect. We cry "God help the babes," and hang the men.

Yet a moment. The child is still before us. May we not see about it — contending for it — the principles of good and evil? A contest between the angels and the fiends? Come hither, statesman; you who live within a party circle; you who nightly fight some miserable fight; continually strive in some selfish struggle for power and place, considering men only as tools, the merest instruments of your aggrandise-

ment; come here, in the wintry street, and look upon God's image in its babyhood! Consider this little *man*. Are not creatures such as these the noblest, grandest things of earth? Have they not solemn natures — are they not subtly touched for the highest purposes of human life? Come they not into this world to grace and dignify it? There is no spot, no coarser stuff in the pauper flesh before you, that indicates a lower nature. There is no felon mark upon it — no natural formation indicating the thief in its baby fingers — no inevitable blasphemy upon its lips. It lies before you a fair, unsullied thing, fresh from the hand of God. Will you, without an effort, let the great fiend stamp his fiery brand upon it? Shall it, even in its sleeping innocence, be made a trading thing by misery and vice? A creature borne from street to street, a piece of living merchandise for mingled beggary and crime? Say; what, with its awakening soul, shall it learn? What lessons whereby to pass through life, making an item in the social sum? Why, cunning will be its wisdom; hypocrisy its truth; theft its natural law of self-preservation. To this child, so nurtured, so taught, your whole code of morals, nay, your brief right and wrong, are writ in stranger figures than Egyptian hieroglyphs, and — time passes — and you scourge the creature never taught, for the heinous guilt of knowing nought but ill! The good has been a sealed book to him, and the dunce is punished with the gaol.

Doubtless, there are great statesmen; wizards in bullion and bank-paper; thinkers profound in cotton, and every turn and variation of the markets, abroad and at home. But there are statesmen yet to come; statesmen of nobler aims — of more heroic action;

teachers of the people; vindicators of the universal dignity of man; apostles of the great social truth that knowledge, which is the spiritual light of God, like his material light, was made to bless and comfort all men. And when these men arise — and it is worse than weak, it is sinful, to despair of them — the youngling poor will not be bound upon the very threshold of human life, and made, by want and ignorance, life's shame and curse. There is not a babe lying in the public street on its mother's lap — the unconscious mendicant to ripen into the criminal — that is not a reproach to the state; a scandal and a crying shame upon men who study all politics, save the politics of the human heart.

To return to the child of our story; to the baby St. Giles; for indeed it is he.

In a moment, Mrs. Aniseed caught the infant to her bosom; and pressed it to her cheek. As she did so, she turned pale, and tears came into her eyes. "It's dead," she cried, "blessed angel! the cold — the cruel cold has killed it."

"Nonsense," said Drizzle, "the woman's for killing everything. It's no more dead than its mother here, and" — and here the watchman turned to his companions for counsel — "and what are we to do with her?"

"We can't take her to the workhouse," said one, "it's past the hour."

"Past the hour!" exclaimed Mrs. Aniseed, still hugging and warming the babe at her bosom — "it isn't past the hour to die, is it?"

"You're a foolish, violent woman," said Drizzle.

"I tell you what we must do; we'll take her to the watch-house."

"The watch-house!" cried Mrs. Aniseed. "Poor soul! what have you got to comfort her with there?"

"Comfort! Well, I'm sure — you do talk it strong! As if women sitting about in doorways was to be treated with comfort. Howsomever, mates," said the benevolent Drizzle, "for once we'll try the work-house."

With this, two of the watchmen raised the woman, and stumbling at almost every step, they bore their burden on. "Make haste!" cried Drizzle, doubtless yearning for the hospitality of his box, "make haste: if the cold doesn't bite a man like nippers!" And so, shambling along, and violently smiting in their turn both arms against his sides, Drizzle preceded his fellows, and at length halted at the workhouse. "It hasn't a wery kindly look, has it?" he cried, as he peered at the mansion of the poor. "All gone to bed, I dare say. And catch any on 'em getting up such a night as this." So saying, Drizzle pulled manfully at the bell, as though fairly to test his powers of attack with the power of resistance within. "The governor, and matern, the nusses, the porter, and all on 'em snoring in lavender." The bare thought of this Elysium added strength to Drizzle's arm, and again he pulled. "Had hot elder wine, or dog's-nose, or something o' the sort, to pull their precious nightcaps on!" And again Drizzle tugged with renewed purpose. "They think o' the poor just as much as they think o' meat and 'tatos, — as only things to live upon." And still the workhouse bell rang a comfortless accompaniment to the watchman's

indignation. "Now, I know it; I could swear it" — cried Drizzle — "they're every one on 'em awake; they can't be otherwise; wide awake, and thinking how precious nice their blankets is, and how cruel cold it is here. Yes; they hear the bell — they do; they can't help it; and they say to themselves, there's some poor devil outside that's frost-bit and going to die, and wants a hot bed, and a dose of brandy, and all that, to bring the life into him again; and he won't have it. No — it's past the hours, and he must come agin to-morrow. That's what the varmint say" — cried Drizzle — "that's what they say to themselves, and then they go off, and sleep all the sweeter for knowing it. It's as good as another blanket to 'em — it is," exclaimed the watchman, enraged by the picture his fancy had executed, no less than by his abortive exertions as the workhouse-bell. "And now, what's to be done? Why, nothin', but to go to the watch-house."

"And I'll take the baby home with me," said Mrs. Aniseed, "and warm it, and give it something, and —"

"Can't allow that," said one of the watchmen.

"Why not, poor lamb?" asked Drizzle, suddenly tender. "She'll take care of it — and what are we to do with it? You don't think she's a goin to steal it?"

"Steal it!" cried the indignant Mrs. Aniseed.

"I should think not," said Drizzle. "Folks needn't steal things o' that sort, I'm sure; the market's overloaded with 'em; they're to be had for nothin', and thank'ee too. So you'll take care of it till the mother comes round?"

"To be sure, I will, poor dear heart!" answered Mrs. Aniseed, hugging the child closer.

"And your name's Aniseed, eh? Yes? And you live in Short's Gardens? All right: to-morrow morning bring the baby to the watch-house. We've nobody to nurse it there, neither wet nor dry."

This touch of humour was not lost upon the watchmen, for they acknowledged it with a loud laugh. Then one of them, suddenly alive to the humanities of his calling, cried, "Let's bear a hand with the woman, or I'm blessed if she won't be dead outright."

And with this, the watchmen bore the mother to the watch-house, and Mrs. Aniseed hurried with the child to her home.

CHAPTER II.

It was past twelve when Mrs. Aniseed reached her abiding-place in Short's Gardens: a place whose name gave warranty of by-gone rusticity; of a time when St. Giles really breathed in the Fields; when blossoming hawthorns offered incense to the saint; when linnets, building in the furze, sang matin hymns to the protector of the leper. Many changes has St. Giles beheld: other and better changes are, we hope, to come. Here, in the fields, was good St. Giles installed the physician and the comforter of leprosy. Here was he known, and prayed to as intercessor between Heaven and suffering man. Disease, the born thing of dirt and poverty, knelt at his shrine and begged for health. And years passed on, and the disease abated. The plague of human kind — arrested by human knowledge and energy — was smitten down, and the leper became a sufferer unknown. And then St. Giles gathered about him the children of poverty. He became the titular saint of rags and squalor. The destitute and the criminal took refuge under his protecting wings. The daily hypocrite on crutches owned St. Giles for his protector; cheats and mumpers of every sort — the town brigands, that with well-aimed falsehoods make wayfaring compassion stand and deliver — dwelt about the shrine of St. Giles, and lied and cheated, starved and revelled in his name. A St. Giles's bird was a human animal of prey — a raven, a kite, a carrion.

crow. And once again, the saint presided over filth, and its born evil, disease; again, St. Giles was sought by lepers, most hideous, most incurable — the lepers of crime and poverty.

And — it cannot be doubted — St. Giles suffered in reputation from the unseemly flocks that gathered about him. In the imaginations of men, he became a low, pauper saint; a saint of vulgar tastes, and vile employments; a saint that was scarcely spoken of, save in connection with craft, and ill manners, and drunkenness, and lying, and thieving. Even saints suffer in renown by constant association which poverty and wickedness.

And then they made St. Giles a hanging saint: made him keep a sort of half-way house, where he offered the final bowl to the Tyburn-bound felon. St. Giles was poor, and was assorted with the gallows. That ignominy is, however, past. Now St. Giles does not offer a comforting draught to thieves: no; he only breeds them.

And now is St. Giles to be wholly reformed. He is to be made a cleanly saint. His cellars, where his infant votaries are begotten for crime, and nurtured for the gaol, are to be destroyed — filled up again. The demon typhus is to be killed with sweet air and fresh water. The brotherhood of St. Giles are no longer to be of the Blessed Order of Filth; they are to wear linen, and wash their hands and faces!

To our story.

It was past twelve, when Mrs. Aniseed ascended the third flight of stairs that led to her home — her one room. A voice was heard proceeding from that room — a voice, droning a street-ballad of the day.

"Why, Susan, I'm blessed if I hadn't given you up," said the voice, the owner of it being a short, broad-chested block of a man, seated before a tolerable fire, which, with half-contemplative look, he continued to scrutinise; never turning his eye towards the partner of his bosom and his hearth. And thus, complacently whiffing smoke from a ruin of a pipe, he continued to stare at the coals and talk: "If I didn't think somebody had run away with you. I've been home this half-hour. Not much luck again to-night. Hardly enough to pay for the link. Howsomever," said Jem, as though still talking to the fire, "I've got something for you."

"And I've got something for you, Jem;" said his wife, seating herself. "Guess what it is."

"No: I never guess with a woman," said Jem; "a man has no chance." And then he asked, "What is it?"

"Look here," cried his wife, unfolding her apron, and discovering the sleeping babe.

Bright Jem jumped from his seat, and now looking at the child — and now in his wife's face — asked, with solemn voice, and uplifted eyebrows, "Where did you get it?"

"I found it, Jem," said the woman.

"Found it! Well, next time, when luck's upon you, I hope you'll find something better." And then, with his forefinger he touched the baby's cheek, and said, somewhat tenderly, "Dear little heart!"

"Can't you see who it's like, Jem?" asked Mrs. Aniseed, and her eyes softened.

"Why, it's like all babies," answered Jem. "I

never see any difference in 'em: all the same, like Dutch cheeses."

"Ha! Jem," said Mrs. Aniseed, "you've never been a mother."

"No," said Jem.

"Else you'd have seen that it's as like our dear lost Dick as one angel's like another."

"Not a bit — not a bit," said Jem in words; but his tone and manner said, "And so it is."

"Oh, I saw it — in a minute, Jem; and I see it now, dear little fellow. He'd ha' been dead, stone-dead in the morning, if I hadn't come up as I did."

And Jem, placing his hands upon his knees, and staring in his wife's face, asked, "And where did you find him?" Whereupon, Mrs. Aniseed — with commendable brevity — narrated the incident of discovery already chronicled.

"Well, poor little chap," said Jem, resuming his seat and his pipe, "he's welcome to board and lodging for one night."

Mrs. Aniseed made no answer. But as the child began to wake, she bustled about the room, and soon prepared for it a sufficing supper. Few were the minutes, and she had the child upon her lap with its bare legs almost roasting at the fire, and with more than infantine energy, trying to swallow the victuals, spoon and all.

"Why, if he doesn't eat like a young sparrow," said Jem, eyeing the little feeder askance. "He's not strange in a strange place, any how."

"Oh, Jem!" cried Mrs. Aniseed, as though she was unburthening her heart of its dearest wish — "Oh, Jem, how I should like to keep it!" Jem said

nothing; but slowly taking the pipe from his mouth, he looked all the amazement he was master of. Of course his wife took no notice of this. She merely continued: "I'm sure, Jem, the dear little soul would bring a blessing on us."

"Yes, and another belly to fill; and another back to cover; and two more feet to shoe; and" — and we know not what inventory of obligations Jem would have made out; but his wife — a fine tactician — began to chirrup, and cry to the child, and make all those legendary noises of the nursery, handed down to us from the time that Eve nursed Cain. Jem was in a moment silenced. Whereupon, in due time, Mrs. Aniseed set the child up, and then danced it in the very face of Jem, calling upon him to remark its extraordinary loveliness, and by consequence, its extraordinary resemblance to their lost Dick.

"He's a sharp little shaver," said Jem, gently pinching the baby's cheeks — when the baby laughed.

"If it doesn't seem to know what you say, Jem," cried Mrs. Aniseed; and then with new vehemence she added, "Something tells me it would be lucky to us."

"Nonsense, woman!" cried Jem; "how can we afford such fancies? You'll be thinking of keeping pugs-dogs and parrots next. Besides, it's impossible, with the playhouse going down as it is."

"I've been quite in the way of babies to-night," said Mrs. Aniseed, a little shifting the subject; "young master's come to town."

"Oh, a boy is it?" grumbled Jem. "Well, he's a better chance of it than that little chap." Mrs. Aniseed drew a very long, deep sigh, intending it for an emphatic affirmation. "He's a good big gold spoon in

his mouth already. Humph! a boy is it? And what, after all, Mrs. Aniseed, what business had you there? You know I don't like it — and you *will* go."

Now this remonstrance applied to the visits of Mrs. Aniseed to a certain house in St. James's-square; at which house a younger spinster sister of the linkman's wife flourished as under kitchen-maid. She, however, had a due contempt for St. Giles's, and all its dwellers; and on certain occasions had not scrupled to express her wonderment that her sister, "who after all was not sich a very plain gal," should have ever taken up with so low a husband as a nasty linkman. She had somehow compared the big bouquets of the footmen with the pitch and hemp with which Bright Jem was wont to earn what she called "his low, dirty bread," and her nice sense of sweetness was grievously offended by the contrast. Sometimes, too, out of purest condescension, Kitty Muggs — for Muggs was the virgin name which no odoriferous lacquey had as yet robbed her of — would visit Short's Gardens. At such times it was impossible for her not to make it known to St. Giles the vast debt of gratitude due from it to St. James: — a debt which Bright Jem — as one of the representatives of the meaner locality — never by the smallest instalment ever permitted himself to pay.

"As for Kitty, he was always very glad to see her if she'd leave her nonsense behind her; but she always walked into the room as if she walked upon eggs; always brushed the chair afore she'd sit down; and always moved with her petticoats lifted up, as if the white honest deal boards of the floor was so much gutter-mud. And then the tea was always so coarse, and not a bit like their gunpowder; and the bacon was

rusty, not a bit like their hams; and in fact there was nothing, no, not even the flesh and blood of Short's Gardens, at all like the flesh and blood of the West-End. Why didn't she keep to her own dripping, and not cast her nose up like a flounder's tail, at the clean, wholesome foot of other people? He hated all such stuff; and what's more, he wouldn't have it." Such, again and again, had been the words of Bright Jem; and he never heard of the sisterly visits of his wife to the aristocratic kitchen-maid, without protesting against them.

"Well," said Mrs. Aniseed, "she's the only relation I have in the world, and I can't help seeing her. Poor girl! she's young and giddy, but she doesn't mean nothing."

"Young and giddy!" cried Jem; "well, I don't know at what time of life geese leave off their giddiness, but she's old enough to be the mother of a good many goslings. Got a boy, have they? — ha! they've been wanting one long enough. Got a young St. James? Well, babies in that quarter may be made of finer sort of stuff than hereabouts; but he can hardly be a handsomer little thing than young St. Giles here." Saying this, Jem held out his arms, and in an instant Mrs. Aniseed had placed the baby in them. "Well, he is a capital little fellow," cried Jem. "Has he done sucking, I wonder?"

"To be sure he has," averred Mrs. Aniseed on her own responsibility.

"A lively little dog, isn't he?" and Jem danced the child upon his knee, and snapped his fingers at it, and the child leapt up, and laughed, and crowed. And then Jem, looking sadly at the infant, said, "And he

is like poor little Dick. I see it now, Susan; he *is* like Dick."

Mrs. Aniseed made no answer; but with great alacrity bustled about the room, and prepared supper. Such preparation was soon made. "Now I'll take him — you can't eat with him in your lap," she said.

"Let him be; I'll manage it — I used to do it once. Well, well — what's gone can't be helped. It's no use a grievin', Susan, is it? — no, not a bit. If times wasn't so bad, now — to be sure he won't take much as he is; but then he'll grow bigger, and —"

"And I'm sure he'd be a comfort to us," cried Mrs. Aniseed, "he looks like it."

"If he isn't fast asleep — Lord! Lord!" cried Jem, gazing at the child, "who to look upon a sleeping baby, and to know what things are every day done in the world, would ever think that all men was sleeping babes once. Put it to bed, Sue; stop a minute" — and Jem tenderly kissed the child. Then turning round, and looking in the fire, he said to himself, "*it is* like little Dick."

Though late when she went to bed, Mrs. Aniseed was an early riser. She had prepared breakfast, and had fed her baby charge before her husband was stirring; and it was plain had determined within herself to place all things in their very rosiest light before the eyes of her helpmate. She had already conned and got by heart twenty arguments to prove the exceeding comfort — nay, the ultimate profit, the child would be to them. And with these arguments simmering in her head, she moved actively about, setting her room in order, at the same time expressing the most en-

dearing pantomime to the infant that lay rolling before the fire. Never since the first quarter of her honeymoon had Mrs. Aniseed shown herself in sweeter temper. Bright Jem was not slow to feel its influence. "Why, Susan, you're as lively as May-day this morning," said he, commencing his toilette. "Where's the little chap?"

"There he is, bless him!" cried Mrs. Aniseed, "and as much at home as if he had been born here. Well, I don't know — I never thought I could love any baby again after Dick."

"Pooh! women can love no end o' babies," said Jem. "They're made a purpose for it." Jem seated himself to breakfast, yet ere he began, recreated himself by tickling the child at his foot with his forefinger, to the mutual delectation of baby and man; whilst Mrs. Aniseed, pausing in a half-cut slice of bread and butter, looked over the table, quite delighted with the sport. How she laughed, and how frequently she assured Jem that she always said he was the best nurse in the world! She then remained solely attentive to the duties of the table, until Jem having achieved his morning bacon, turned himself round, and with his elbows upon his knees, looked thoughtfully down upon the child.

"Well, that's a better place than a door-step, any how," said Jem, as the baby kicked before the fire.

"Yet that's what it must come to again, Jem, if we're hard-hearted enough to turn it out."

"Humph! It's a shame they should be born, Sue; a downright shame," said Jem mournfully.

"La! how can the man talk such wickedness?"

"I always think so, when I see 'em running about — poor dirty creturs — as if they'd been spawned in gutter-mud."

"With nobody to teach 'em nothing!"

"Oh, yes; they all of 'em go to school, such as it is," cried Jem bitterly.

"I'm sure, Jem, they don't," said his wife. "There ar'n't schools enough for 'em; and then again how many of their parents don't care whether they know no more than headstrong pigs?"

"Oh, yes; they all listen to a schoolmaster. I've seen him talking among 'em under gateways, and in corners, and in courts, and afore shop-windows, and in all sorts o' places in the streets; yes, a schoolmaster teaching little things — and how they do learn, to be sure — no taller than that;" and here Jem, with impressive action, held up a wire toasting-fork.

"I never heard of him in the parish," said Mrs. Aniseed; "what schoolmaster do you mean?"

"The devil, Susan, the devil: I've seen him among the children, horns, tail, and all — ha! quite as nat'ral as he's shown in any pantomime — I've seen him as plain as I see you; and whilst he's been teaching 'em, I've seen beside him Jack Ketch a grinnin', and a rubbin' his hands, and a smackin' his mouth like a fellow as sees a hearty meal, and wants to fall to. I say it, Susan, and I'll stand to it — it's a shame they're born."

"Won't it be a blessed thing to snatch this darling cretur — if it doesn't look sensible as though it knew what we was talkin' of — this pretty cretur from all such trouble, all such wickedness?" asked Mrs. Aniseed, moving closer to her husband.

"Why, there was little Tom Jumper" — mused Jem — "and pretty Jack Needles — and that sarcy little chap, but no real harm in him at first, Bob Winkin — didn't you and me know 'em all? And wasn't they all ruined afore they knew what ruin was? Where are they now? Why, ask Newgate — ask Newgate," said Jem, moodily. "And that's what they'll do with you, my little codger" — and Jem nodded to the infant, — "that's what they'll do with you. I can see it — though it's a good many years off yet — I can see the rope about your little neck as sure —"

"La, Jem!" screamed Mrs. Aniseed; and she instantly seized the baby in her arms, and hugged it to her breast, as though to protect it from impending peril.

"Why, what an old fool you are!" said Jem, wanly smiling at his wife.

"Well, you shouldn't talk in that way," answered Mrs. Aniseed, "it's tempting Providence. If you're such a fortune-teller, and can see so much, it's a bound duty upon you, Jem, to prevent it." Jem was silent: therefore his wife — true to her sex — talked on: "You ought to go down upon your knees, and bless yourself that you can make this darling lamb your own, and save it."

Jem was silent a minute; and then spoke somewhat briskly on the inspiration of a new thought. "It's all very well about lambs, my dear; but how do we know they'll let us have it? How do we know that its mother —"

"It hasn't no mother, Jem. I slipt out afore you woke, and I run down to the watch-house, and its mother died in the night, Jem; I thought she couldn't

live. It's a hard thing to say, but it's no loss to the child; she's gone, and I won't say nothing about her; but them as know her give her shocking words. So here's the child, Jem, a begging of you, with all its little might" — and here the woman put the baby's hands together — "to take it, and to do all you can for it, and to be sure that our little, under such a blessing, will never grow less; and here it is — isn't it like our dear Dick, Jem? — here it is, a praying you to take pity on it, and love it, and be a father to it. And you will, Jem? — you will?" cried the woman, the tears coming into her eyes, as she held the infant towards her husband.

Now Bright Jem was in face and figure as uncomely a lump of humanity as is ordinarily met with in any one day's travel. His flat broad face was the colour of ancient parchment, thinly sprinkled with deep pock-marks. His mouth was capacious as a horse-shoe. Short brush-bristles thatched his head; and his eye-brows clubbing together, could not have mustered fifty hairs between them. His small, deep-set black eyes — truly black, for there seemed no white to them — were the lamps that lighted up with quick and various expression this most difficult countenance; and, in the present instance, did certainly appear as though they twinkled with a fire direct from the heart. Jem was an ugly man. He knew it. This truth had been so frequently, so earnestly, so plainly impressed upon him, that — slow as most men are in such belief — he could not but believe it. More: we believe that he was quite contented with the creed. There are times, however, when ugliness may steal a look — a tint from beauty. We believe that no

woman, for instance — if she marry for love — let her be ugly as Sibyl, looks altogether ugly on her wedding-day. How it is done, whence it comes, we have not the philosophy to fathom; but sure we are that the spirit of beauty does sometimes irradiate the features of deformity, melting and moulding them into momentary comeliness, — and most sure we are, that the said spirit did with its best doing, shine in the countenance of Jem, as his wife pressed the orphan child upon him.

“You’ll love it, and be father to it?” again cried Mrs. Aniseed.

“If I don’t,” cried Jem, “I’m —” but the wife stopped whatever word was coming, by putting the child’s face to Jem’s mouth; and he took the creature in his arms, and hugged it fondly, nay, vigorously.

“And now is young St. Giles snatched from the lowest round of the ladder — (can it be Jacob’s ladder that, resting on the mud of a cellar, is still to lead to heaven?) — Now is he caught from direst destitution; from the teaching of hypocrisy, and craft, and crime, to have about him comforts — though small comforts it is true; to be no longer shown, the image of poverty — a thing of human flesh and blood to extort halfpence upon? Is he really to be promoted from the foul, dark vault of a loathsome lane — savage beasts have sweeter sleeping-places — to the wholesomeness, the light, the airiness, the respectability of a three-pair front, in Short’s Gardens? To that very three-pair front which Kitty Muggs, of St. James’s-square, looks down upon from her scullery with all the loftiness of contempt? Yes, it is true: St. Giles will be promoted. On the dunghill of poverty,

how great the distinction between the layers of straw: what a world of difference between base, half-way, and summit! There is an aristocracy of rags, as there is an aristocracy of stars and garters.

Alas! for only one minute is young St. Giles housed in his new home — for only one minute is he the adopted babe of James and Susan Aniseed, when he is called back to act his unconscious part of mendicant, when he is reclaimed, carried away in bondage, the born slave of penury and wrong. It is even so.

Before Jem had ceased caressing the child, he heard an unusual hubbub on the staircase; another instant, and his door was flung open, and a wretched, ragged woman — worn, thin, and ghastly — staggered into the room, followed by other women. “My babe — my own babe!” cried the first woman, and was falling in a heap upon the floor, when Jem rapidly placing the child in his wife’s arms, caught the intruder. Aroused, excited beyond her strength, she pointed to the child, tried to speak, and then fainted.

The cause of this interruption was soon made known to Jem: “The dear soul had come after her child.”

“Her child!” cried Mrs. Aniseed. “She’s not the child’s mother, and she sha’n’t have it. I saw the mother last night — saw her froze to death — at least she died soon afterwards.”

“Why, you see,” said an old crone, “this is how it is. The dear woman there, that’s the darling’s mother, was sick of a fever — the Lord help us, she’s sick now, and so is half the lane. Well, you see, being so sick, she couldn’t go out herself not by any means. Well, and so she lends the child to Peggy

Flit; and when Peg never came back at all, the poor creetur that's there, went well nigh mad. And this morning, we found at the watch-house that Peg was dead, and that you had got the babe; and you see we've come for it, and that's all," said the harridan with diplomatic precision.

"But if she's the mother," asked Mrs. Aniseed, "for what should she lend the child?"

"For what should she lend the child!" crowed the old woman, looking very contemptuously at her catechist — "for what should she lend, — why in the name of blessed heaven for what else, if not to go a begging with it?"

In fine — for why should we protract the scene? — young St. Giles, the unconscious baby beggar, was borne back in triumph to Hampshire Hog Lane.

CHAPTER III.

It would be tedious work for the reader, did we chronicle every event of the long life of little St. Giles from the hour that he was snatched from Short's Gardens, until time beheld him in the mature manhood of seven years old. A long life in sooth, that six years and a half; for how much had St. Giles accomplished in it! What a stride had he made in existence, passing over childish days — childish ignorance; exempt, by fortune of his birth, from all the puerilities, the laughing thoughtlessness of babyhood. He was now a suckling, and now a dwarfed man. There was no dallying pause, no middle space for him, to play with life, knowing not his playmate — no bit of green sward, with flowers for toys. Oh, no! he was made, with sudden violence, to know life. He saw not the lovely thing life, through golden shadows, roseate hues; he looked not at it through the swimming eyes of childhood; a glorious thing to be approached through what seem beauties numberless, that gradually fade and fade as we advance upon the green uplands of time, unveiling to us by degrees the cold, hard, naked truth — the iron image, life. St. Giles had no such preparation. Suddenly, and with the merciless strength of want, he was made to look on life in its fiercest, foulest aspect. He saw at once the grim idol he had to serve, and all unconsciously, he served it. Unconsciously, too, he carried in his look, his air, his

speech, a premature wisdom. He had learned, as at once, his whole task; but the suddenness of the teaching had wiped out childhood from his face: he had paid at one sum, although he knew it not, the price of life, for life's worst knowledge.

How very differently did young St. James con his lesson, life! In reality, only six months younger than his squalid brother — for in this story St. Giles and St. James must fraternise — he was still the veriest babe. Why, it was gladness to the heart to look at him — to hear his blithe voice — to see him, in that happy freedom of infancy, when children play in the vestibule of life — as children sometimes play with flowers picked from graves in a church-porch; heedless whence they pluck their pleasures, thoughtless of the mystery of mysteries taught within. And what prophecies — with what “sweet breath composed” — were uttered to his glorification! What a man he would make! What a blessing he would prove to his begetters! What a treasure to the world at large! And so, young St. James, fed with the sweetest and the best, clothed with the softest and the richest — fondled, kissed, caressed — was, in truth, a glorious creature. There was happiness, delicate beauty, in his soft pink and white cheek — innocence, intelligence, in his large, laughing eyes. All he knew of the world was, that it was one large play-place filled with many-sorted toys; with battledores, humming-tops, and rocking-horses. Compared with young St. Giles, how very ignorant!

In something more than the six years elapsed since our last chapter, St. Giles had made more profitable use of time. But then he had had the sharpest

teachers — and so many opportunities! Hunger and cold were his tutors, and rapid and many are the degrees of human knowledge conferred by them, albeit their scholars are not prone to brag of their learning. Young St. James was bounded by the garden, or the parks; or when he saw and heard the hurry and roar of London, he took his imperfect lessons through a carriage-window. Now, St. Giles — the matured, seven years' adult — was a busy merchant on the great mart of men. Every day he carried some new lie to market, played some new part, in obedience to the fiend in his bowels, that once a day at least cried, "Eat, eat." And sometimes, too, the fiend would vary his cry, and after long grumbling, long suffering, too, would mutter, "Steal, steal." And what was there in the word to appal St. Giles? Nothing; he had heard it so early: it was to him an old familiar sound — a household syllable. True it is, he had heard that it was wrong to steal: he had heard many other things, too, that were wrong; many that were right. But somehow they were jumbled in that little active brain of his. He could not separate them. He supposed there were some people whose business in the world it was to steal; just as there were some people born to fine houses and fine clothes, — whilst some were only born to cellars and rags. And so, wicked St. Giles would pilfer — such is human iniquity — with no more conscience than a magpie.

With this preface, touching the advanced years and various accomplishments of our heroes, let us now take up our broken narrative.

One of the seven airiest and finest streets that

compose the Seven Dials — for we care not to name the exact spot — boasted the advent of a tradesman, who employed the whole vigour of his mind, and he himself thought not meanly of its power, on the manufacture of muffins. At the time of our present chapter, Mr. Capstick had only lived a twelvemonth under the protection of St. Giles; paying the Saint due parish rates for such advantage. Where Mr. Capstick came from, nobody knew. It was plain he was one of those people who now and then drop from the sky into a neighbourhood for no other end than to adorn and dignify it. Any way, it was plain that Mr. Capstick thought as much; and he was not a man to disguise his thoughts when they at all tended to his self-glorification. True it was, muffins had been known in St. Giles's ere Mr. Capstick lighted his oven there. But what muffins! How, too, were they made — where vended? Why, as Mr. Capstick would observe, they were made as if they were bad halfpence — and they were quite as hard to chew — in guilt and darkness. Nobody knew what they were eating. Now, all the world might see him make *his* muffins. Indeed, he would feel obliged to the world if it would take that trouble. To be sure, he was throwing his muffins to swine — but he couldn't help that. It wasn't his nature to do anything that wasn't first-rate: he knew he was a loser by it; all men who did so were; nevertheless, a man who was a true man would go on ruining himself for the world, though he might hate the world all the time he was doing it. His muffins were open to the universe. There was no mystery in him, none at all. And then he would say, glowing at times with a strange eloquence, "What a

glorious thing it would be for the world, if every man made his muffin — whatever that muffin might be — in the open light of heaven; and not in a cupboard, a hole, a corner! It was making muffins in secret, and in darkness, that made three parts of the misery of mankind." When people heard Mr. Capstick discourse after this fashion, they would confidentially declare to one another, that it was plain he was born above his business: he was a broken-down gentleman; perhaps come of a Jacobite family, and made muffins to hide his disgrace. True it was, there was a pompousness, a swagger, an affected contempt of the people with whom he turned the penny, that gave some warranty for these opinions. Notwithstanding, Mr. Capstick, with all his consequence, all his misanthropy, — and he wore his hatred of mankind as he would have worn a diamond ring, a thing at once to be put in the best light and to be very proud of — was a great favourite. The cellars of St. Giles's echoed his praises. He was, in his way, a great benefactor to his poorest neighbours. "You see, Mary Anne," he would say to his wife, "what a blessing there is in corn. When muffins are too stale to sell, they're always good enough to give away." And these remainder muffins he would frequently bestow upon the veriest needy, accompanied with phrases that spoke his contempt of human nature, his own particular nature included.

Such was Mr. Capstick — such was the self-important muffin-maker — whom we have now to introduce to the reader. The time was about two o'clock on a gusty March afternoon; and Mr. Capstick stood erect behind his counter, evidently strung for some important task. There was a weight of meaning in

his broad, white face; and a big black cap, selected it would seem with an eye to the picturesque, impending over his brow, imparted to it a severity not to be lost upon vulgar beholders. Having thrust his hands and half his arms into his breeches pockets — as though to place himself firmly on his centre — the muffin-maker proceeded to interrogate a child before him, speaking very loud, and frowning very significantly the while. The child, reader, was young St. Giles. You left him when he was a nursling; and the boy man stands before you. He is puny and dwarfed; a miserable little chit in his anatomy; but his sharp, fox-like face — his small black eyes, now looking bashfulness, and now brightening with impudence — his voice, now coaxing, and now drawling — prove him to be an almost equal match for his burly questioner, the clever, pompous, world-knowing muffin-maker.

“So; you are the little dog that came begging of me in Bowstreet?” growled Capstick.

“I’m the werry dog, Sir,” answered St. Giles, in no way daunted by Capstick’s thunder.

“Don’t you know that boys oughtn’t to beg? Don’t you know that I could have sent you to gaol for begging? Eh? Don’t you know that?” asked the magnificent muffin-maker very loudly.

“Yes, Sir; I knows it, Sir,” replied the child, with a wonderful knowledge of law.

“And if you know better, why don’t you do better?” said Capstick.

“Don’t know what better is, Sir,” returned St. Giles, looking down at the floor, and shuffling his feet.

"Humph!" mused Capstick, and then he somewhat gently asked, "Should you like to learn it, my little boy?"

"Isn't it werry hard, Sir?" inquired St. Giles. "Don't like hard learning, Sir."

"What, you've tried, have you? You have been to school, eh? You can write a little, St. Giles, and read a little?" said the muffin-maker.

"No, Sir; never went to school; never had time, Sir. Besides, Sir, father always used to say, school was so werry dummy."

"Dummy! What's dummy?" cried the muffin-maker.

Young St. Giles leered up in Capstick's face, and then giving himself a twist, as though enjoying the tradesman's ignorance, said — "Not know what dummy is! Why, Sir, if you please, dummy's *flash*."

"Oh! then you know *flash*?" asked Capstick.

"I know a little, Sir," replied St. Giles, very modestly: "know more when I grows bigger."

"I dare say you will," cried the muffin-maker, pityingly, "And tell me, what's your father doing now?"

"He's a doing nothing now, Sir."

"No!" said Capstick.

"No, Sir, — he's dead," said St. Giles; but whether in simplicity or jest, the muffin-maker did not discover.

"And you've never been taught to do anything? Poor little wretch!" cried Capstick.

It was plain that young St. Giles rejected the compassion of the muffin-maker; for he immediately, with much volubility, asserted: "I knows a good many

things, Sir; sometimes, Sir, goes singing o' ballads with Tom Blast: was to have gone with him to-day; only Tom's so precious hoarse, crying dying speeches yesterday. Then I knows how to sell matches, and hold osses, and do a many things, Sir, as I forget now."

Capstick looked at the urchin for a few moments, then leaning over the counter, and beckoning St. Giles closer, he said to him, in a tone of tenderness — "You'd like to be a good boy, wouldn't you?"

"A course, Sir," answered St. Giles, with stolid face.

"And so be a good man; and so at last get a nice shop, such as this, eh? You'd like it, eh?"

"Wouldn't I though!" cried St. Giles, playing with his hair and grinning.

"Instead of wandering about the streets — and singing ballads — and going along with boys, that at last may lead you to be hanged?"

"I saw Bill Filster hung, yesterday," cried St. Giles sharply, and his eyes sparkled as with the recollection of the treat.

"O Lord! oh Lord!" groaned the muffin-maker. "You little rascal! who took you?"

"Went with some big boys," answered the unabashed St. Giles. "I give Phil Slant a happle to let me set upon his shoulders. Bill Filster used to live in our lane. Poor Bill! It was so prime."

The muffin-maker spasmodically whipped his cap from his head, and drawing a long breath, wiped his brows; the while he looked at young St. Giles with pity, and something like bitterness. The next moment

he cried to himself, "Poor little wretch! Poor little animal!"

"I know'd Bill Filster. Once he lived in our lane. Oh, couldn't he sing a song! He teach'd me one about Dick Turpin. Sometimes," said St. Giles, bending his small quick eyes on Capstick, "sometimes people have given me a penny to sing it."

The muffin-maker made no reply; but with a lofty waving of the hand — immediately understood by St. Giles — commanded silence. Then did Mr. Capstick walk up and down behind his counter, self-communing. Fix his flying thoughts in words, and they would read somewhat as follow: — "A little scoundrel! Poor wretch, how can he help it? What's he been taught? Wrong, wrong; nothing but wrong. There's a manner in the little villain, too, that promises something better. He's but a babe! Poor miserable thing! and what a knowing little rascal! Well, it won't ruin me — thank God! — it can't ruin me." And then Mr. Capstick again laid himself across the counter, and said a little sternly to young St. Giles — "Come here, you Sir."

"Yes, Sir," said St. Giles, stepping up to the muffin-maker, and looking confidently in the face of his patron.

"If I was to be your friend, and try to save you from being hanged — there, don't cry" — for St. Giles affecting sensibility had already raised his arm to his eyes — "If I was to save you from being hanged, for else you're pretty sure to come to it, would you be a good boy, eh?"

"Oh, wouldn't I, Sir!" cried St. Giles. "I jest would then."

"Well — do you think you could sell muffins?" And this question Mr. Capstick put in a low, cautious voice, with his eye turned watchfully towards the back parlour, as though he feared some sudden detection.

"I should like it so!" cried young St. Giles, rubbing his hands.

Capstick was evidently taken with the boy's alacrity for the profession, for he quickly said — "Then I'll make a man of you. Yes; I'll set you up in business." With these words Capstick produced a small basket from behind the counter. "Be a good boy, now," he said, "an honest boy, and this basket may some day or the other grow into a big shop. Understand; you can understand, I know, for you've a lot of brains of some sort in your eyes, I can see. Understand, that if you're civil and painstaking, your fortune's made. This is the best chance you ever had of being a man. Here's a basket and a bell," — for in the days we write of, the muffin-bell was not unmusical to legislative ears — "and two dozen muffins. You'll get two shillings for 'em, for they're baker's dozens. Then come here to-morrow; I'll set you up again, and give you a lumping profit for yourself. There's the goods;" and Capstick, with exceeding gravity, placed the basket in one hand of St. Giles, and a small metal bell in the other. "Tell me, my boy, did you ever see Lord Mayor's show?"

"Yes, Sir; many times," said the seven-year-old St. Giles.

"And the Lord Mayor in his gold coach, and the trumpeters before him, and all that? Now, attend to me" — and the muffin-maker became still more grave. "Attend to me. There's many a Lord Mayor who

never had the start you have — who never was so lucky to begin life upon muffins. So, when bad boys come about you, and want you to idle and play with 'em, and do worse than that it may be — just think of the Lord Mayor, and what you *may* come to."

"Yes, Sir, I will, Sir," said young St. Giles, impatient to begin business.

"Then go along with you," cried Capstick; "and mind people don't call me a fool for trusting you. There, go," said the tradesman, a little pompously — "cry muffins, and be happy!"

St. Giles jumped from the step into the street, and rang his bell, and chirped "muffins" with the energy of a young enthusiast. Capstick, with complacency upon his face, looked for a time after the child; he then muttered — "Well, if it saves the little wretch, it's a cheap penn'orth."

"At your old doings again!" cried Mrs. Capstick, who from the dark nook of a back parlour had watched what she often called the weakness of her husband.

"My dear Mary Anne," chuckled Mr. Capstick, as though laughing at a good joke — "'tis the little rascal that, I told you, set upon me in Bow-street. I've given him a few of the stale ones — he's rogue enough to pass 'em off I know. Ha! ha! I like to see the villany of life — it does me good. After, as you know, what life's done for me, it's meat and drink to me to see crops of little vagabonds coming up about us like mustard-seed — all of 'em growing up to cheat and rob, and serve the world as it should be served; for it's a bad world — base and brassy as a bad shilling." And with this ostentatious, counterfeit misanthropy, would the muffin-maker award to his best

deeds the worst motives. And Mrs. Capstick was a shrewd woman. She suffered herself to seem convinced of her husband's malice of heart, — knowing as she did its thorough excellence. But then the muffin-maker had been bitterly used by the world. "His wine of life," he would say, "had been turned into vinegar."

"Well, you'll be ruined your own way," cried Mrs. Capstick.

"And that, Mary Anne," said the muffin-maker, "is some comfort in ruin. When so many people would ruin us, it's what I call a triumph over the villany of the world to be ruined after one's own pattern."

"Good afternoon, Ma'am — why, you're welcome as the flowers in spring," said Mrs. Capstick to a woman flauntily dressed, and burning in red ribands, who suddenly entered the shop; a woman, whose appearance did scarcely suggest the beauty and tenderness of spring flowers. "I haven't seen you these three months."

"Oh lor no!" said the woman, "that court will be the death of all of us."

Let not the reader imagine that Kitty Muggs complained of the tainted air or confined limits of any court in the neighbourhood. No, indeed; she spoke of no other court than the Court of St. James.

"What! Queen Charlotte will so often make you take tea with her, eh?" said the muffin-man, with his severest sneer. "It's too bad; she oughtn't to be so hard upon you."

"Oh, there's so much dining and dining — cabinet dinners, my dear, they call 'em — for they always eat

most when they've most to do, — that I might as well be in the galleys. However, they're all going to the play to-night, and — it's a poor heart that never rejoices — I'm going there myself."

"Well, I don't know that you could do a better thing," said Capstick; "there's a good deal to be learnt at a play, if fools will learn anything."

"Oh! a fiddle's end upon learning. I go for a nice deep tragedy; something cutting, that will do me good. There's nothing so refreshing as a good cry, when, my dear, you know after all there's nothing to cry about. Tears was given us to enjoy ourselves with — that is, tears at the play-house."

"They wash out the mind, like a dirty tea-cup," said the muffin-maker, "and give a polish to the feelings."

"They always do with me, Mister Capstick," said the woman. "I never feel so tender and so kind to all the world as when I've had a good cry; and, thank Heaven! a very little makes me cry. What we women should do, if we couldn't cry, my dear, nobody knows. We're treated bad enough as it is, but if we couldn't cry when we liked, how we should be put upon — what poor, defenceless creturs we should be!"

"Nature's been very kind to you," said the muffin-maker. "Next to the rhinoceros, there's nothing in the world armed like a woman. And she knows it."

"I'm not talking of brute beasts, Mister Capstick," said the fair one, tossing her head; and then approaching the shop-door, she looked intently down the street.

Mrs. Capstick, to change the conversation, carelessly observed — "You are not looking for anybody, Kitty?"

"For nobody in particular," said Kitty, and she again gazed very anxiously. "The truth is, one of our gentlemen is going to the play with me. We didn't leave the house together, for you know what foolishness people talk. I told him to meet me here. I'm going to buy some muffins," she quickly added, as a justifiable trading excuse for the liberty she had taken.

"Never mind the muffins," said Capstick; "if I can help you to a husband in any lawful way, Kitty, why I owe the world such a grudge, I'll do anything to do it."

Kitty, in her maiden confusion, unconscious of the muffin-maker's satire, merely said, "Lor! Mr. Capstick."

"What sort of a gentleman is he?" asked Mrs. Capstick.

"There, again," said the muffin-maker, "if it isn't droll! There can't be a woman ever so old, that, when she thinks she smells a sweet-heart somewhere, doesn't snigger and grin as if her own courting days were come again. Well, you are a strange lot, you women!"

"What sort of a gentleman is he, Kitty?" repeated the unmoved Mrs. Capstick.

Kitty smiled very forcibly, and answered, "Oh, a — a dark gentleman. And now, Mrs. Capstick, let me have a shilling's-worth of muffins. Dear me! Why don't you come and live in Pell Mell? Muffins is the only things that we haven't tip-top at the West-end. You're burying yourself here, in St. Giles; you are,

indeed. If you'd only come West-end — only don't let it be known where you come from — I could put your muffins, as I may say, into millions of families."

"It's worth thinking of," said the sly Capstick. "I might be appointed muffin-maker to the Royal Family. Might put up the Royal Arms, with a gold toasting-fork in the lion's mouth."

"To be sure you might," said the sanguine Kitty; "and if you've a mind to do it, I'll speak to the cook — he's the best of friends with the butler — the butler will speak to the valet — the valet will speak to master — and master's only got to catch the king in a good humour to do anything with him. I tell you what do," said Kitty, as struck by a brilliant thought: "send in a couple of dozen muffins to-morrow, and I'll manage to introduce 'em."

"And you think his gracious Majesty's to be got at in this way, through the kitchen?" asked Capstick.

"I'm certain sure of it; it's done every day; or what's the good of having a master in what they call a cabinet? There's nothing like working up'ards, Mr. Capstick — I know what the court is. I'd have done a good deal for Jem — they call him Bright Jem, but I could never see his brightness — only he's as proud as a peacock with a Sunday tail. I could have got him — ah! I don't know what I couldn't have got him — only he'd never let me ask for it. Ha! if my foolish sister hadn't married, as I may say, in the gutter, she might have been quite as well off as me."

"She seems very happy, for all that," said Mrs. Capstick.

"Poor thing! she doesn't know no better," said Kitty; "she oughtn't to be happy though. I'm going

to tea with her, and to take them muffins; for though she has married a low tradesman, I can't forget she's my sister; and yet you should hear how I do get laughed at about it, sometimes in our house. But feelings is feelings, Mr. Capstick. Oh!" added Kitty with much vivacity, and an affected flutter — "here comes the gentleman. Now, think of what I've said, Mr. Capstick; there's the shilling." And Kitty, taking the muffins, turned out of the shop, meeting a black footman — black as guilt — as he was about to enter. "Here I am, Cesar," said Kitty; and taking an ebony arm, she walked with him away.

"Why, bless me! She's never going to marry a nigger!" cried the muffin-maker's wife. "She'll never do such a thing! Eh, Mr. Capstick?"

"Why, Mary Anne," said the misanthrope, "Miss Kitty is a long way the other side of a chicken. And when women of her time of life can't snow white, they'll snow black."

CHAPTER IV.

WE must again solicit the company of the reader to the lodging of Bright Jem, Short's Gardens. It is the same clean, dull room, as shown in our second chapter: one of the many nooks in which the care and industry of woman do somehow make poverty and snugness half friends; in which penury has at least the cheerful hue of cleanliness. Bright Jem again smoked at the fire-place. Though more than six years had passed, they had run off his face like oil. Here and there his stubbly hair was dredged with grey; his broad back was bent a little, nothing more. Indeed, Jem's was one of those faces, in which time seems at once to do its best and worst. It grew a little browner with years like walnut-wood; but that was all.

We cannot say — and in truth it is a ticklish question to ask of those who are best qualified to give an answer — if there really be not a comfort in substantial ugliness: in ugliness that, unchanged, will last a man his life; a good granite face in which there shall be no wear and tear. A man so appointed, is saved many alarms, many spasms of pride. Time cannot wound his vanity through his features; he eats, drinks, and is merry, in despite of mirrors. No acquaintance starts at sudden alteration, hinting in such surprise, decay and the final tomb. He grows older with no former intimates — churchyard voices! — crying, "How you're altered!" How many a man might have been

a truer husband, a better father, firmer friend, more valuable citizen, had he, when arrived at legal maturity, cut off — say, an inch of his nose. This inch — only an inch! — would have destroyed the vanity of the very handsomest face; and so, driven the thoughts of a man from a vulgar looking-glass, a piece of shop crystal, — and more, from the fatal mirrors carried in the heads of women to reflect, heaven knows how many coxcombs who choose to stare into them, — driven the man to the glass of his own mind. With such small sacrifice, he might have been a philosopher. Thus considered, how many a coxcomb may be within an inch of a sage! True, there was an age when wise men — at least a few of them — glorified in self-mutilation, casting sanguinary offerings to the bird of wisdom. But this was in the freshness and youth of the world; in the sweet innocence of early time. But the world grows old; and like a faded, fashionable beauty, the older it grows the more it lays on the paint.

And the sum and end of this swelling paragraph is this. If, O reader! you are young and believe yourself handsome, avoid the peril of beauty. Think of Narcissus, and — cut off your nose. Only an inch! And now let us descend to the hearth and home of Bright Jem.

Mrs. Aniseed still shone, in comfortable looks, at the fire-side. Her face was a little thinner, a little longer; but time had touched her as though, for the good heart that was in her bosom, he loved her.

A third person — a visitor — was present: a woman of any age. Her face seemed bloodless — white as chalk — formed in sharp outline. She was

poorly drest, — and yet it was plain she aimed at a certain flow and amplitude of costume that should redeem her from among the vulgar. Her head was armed with a white stiff muslin cap, frilled and pointed: it seemed a part of her; a thing growing upon her, like the crest of some strange bird. She sat motionless, with her arms crossed, like an old figure in faded tapestry. Poor soul! she seemed one of the remnants of another age, that Time, as he clears away generations, forgets now and then to gather up: or it may be, purposely leaves them for a while as century posts of a past age. Miss Canary — such was her name — was very poor; nevertheless, she had one sustaining comfort, which — as though it were a cordial — she took to her heart twenty times a day. It was this: “She was born a lady; nobody could deprive her of that.” And it was this proud thought that, like an armed knight, attended her in the gallery of Covent Garden Theatre, where, condescending to poverty, she every evening offered for sale apples and oranges, cider, and a bill of the play. It was this thought of her born gentility that kept her taciturn and stately amidst the free comments of apprentices, the wit of footmen, and the giggling of holiday maids. The dignity of her utterance, her stately bearing, had some years past obtained for her the name of Lady Canary. And she deserved it. For she offered apples, oranges, cider, and a bill of the play, as though she really invited the gods to the fruit of the Hesperides, to the very choicest sort of nectar, and a new poem by Apollo. There was no solicitation in her tone, — but a sort of disciplined condescension; and she took the money

for her commodities with nothing of the air of a trader, but of a tax-gatherer; or rather of a queen receiving homage in the tangible form of halfpence. And all this she owed to the constant thought that glorified her far beyond the heroines upon the stage — (empresses for a night), — to the possessing idea that “she was born a lady; and nobody could deprive her of that.” It was this family pride — from what family she rose and declined she never told — that now engaged her in, we fear, an unequal controversy with Bright Jem; his wife, oddly enough, taking no part in the debate, but sitting at the fire, now smiling and now nodding commendation of either deserving party.

“No, Mr. James, no, I tell you, I was born a lady, and I couldn’t do it,” said Miss Canary. “You are a very good man, a very kind creature, Mr. Aniseed; but excuse me, you don’t know what high life’s made of.”

“Not all made o’ sugar, I dare say,” said Jem, “no more than our life’s all made o’ mud.”

“But I ought to know; for I tell you again, I was born a lady,” cried the playhouse Pomona.

“Nonsense,” said Jem. “I tell you, Miss Canary, there isn’t sich a thing as a born lady in the world.”

“Why! you never, Mr. James!” and Miss Canary was scandalised at the heresy.

“Born lady!” repeated Jem, laughingly; and then moving his chair towards his disputant, he touched her mittened arm with his pipe, saying — “Look here, now. There’s Mrs. Grimble, at number five, she had a little gal last week, — you know that?”

Well; Mrs. Grimble is a clear-starcher. That you allow? And for that reason — now tell me this, — for that reason is her little baby born a clear-starcher? Eh? I should like to know as much as that now?"

"Oh, Mr. James! you're a good person, — but you know you're a low man; no, no; you can't understand these things." And Miss Canary smiled a pitying smile.

"I tell you," said Jem, "there's no such thing as born ladies and gentlemen. There's little bits of red girls and boys born if you will, — and you may turn 'em into — now, look here," said Jem, "if there was to be some folks born gentlemen and some not, — why wasn't there two Adams and two Eves, for the high people and the low ones?"

"Oh, Mr. James!" cried Miss Canary, half rising from her seat — "For your precious soul's sake, I hope not; but I *do* think you're an *athist*."

"I can't tell, I'm sure," said Jem, not comprehending the conveyed reproach. "I don't know; but as for my soul, Miss Canary, — why, I try to keep it as clean and take as good care of it as a soldier takes care of his gun, so that it may be always in fighting order against the enemy."

"You think so, Mr. James; but with your notions, it's impossible. Oh, Mrs. Aniseed, I do wonder at you! How you can hear your good man talk as he does, and still sit laughing in that way! Ha, I bless my stars, I've not a husband to be miserable about."

"Well, I'm sure, Miss Canary, I wish you had," said Mrs. Aniseed, laughing the more. "If you was

only as miserable as I am, what a deal happier you'd be! People who live alone with nobody but a cat, — I don't know how it is, but they do get a little like their company."

"Susan," said Jem; and taking the pipe from his mouth, he looked full at his wife, and shook his head reprovingly. "I won't have it, Susan."

"La, Jem! Mayn't I speak in my own house?" cried the wife.

"It's the very last place you ought to speak in, Susan, if you can't speak nothing that's comfortable. If you and Miss Canary want a good bout together, why, I hope I know women too well to be unreasonable. 'Point a place and take an early hour that you may get it over in one day, and not at your own fire-side, where you ask a body to come and sit down coöily with you. It's a mean advantage. A wild Injun wouldn't do it."

"I'm sure, Jem, I meant nothing," said Mrs. Aniseed.

"That's it, Susan; that's the shame and nonsense o' the thing. A man might bear a good deal of noise from you women — I don't mean you, Miss Canary — if there was half-an-ounce of meaning in it. But when you get upon an argiment one with another, you go at it liké a monkey on a drum. It's all a row without a bit of tune in it. And then, nine times out o' ten, after you've been spitting and clawing at one another, you make it up you don't know why, and all of a sudden you're sociable together as two kittens at the same sarcer of milk. And now, Susan, my old woman, get the tea."

Mrs. Aniseed, with a sudden smile on her face,

called there by the kindly tone of the conjugal mandate, said, "You're a queer cretur, Jem," and was about to quit the room. She paused a moment at the door, and nodding significantly to Jem, said, "Muffins," and then vanished.

We know not whether the word reached Miss Canary, but she observed, with new cordiality, — "She's a dear woman, Mr. James; and now she can't hear me, I don't mind saying it — I love her like any sister."

Bright Jem said nothing, but sucked his pipe with a loud smack.

"Nothing's a trouble to her. She's done many things for me, that I couldn't have done myself; but then, as I say, Mr. James, I was born a lady, and though I do sell fruit in the playhouse, thank heaven! I never forget myself."

"Not when your cat's a starving?" said Jem, drily.

"Now, we won't talk of that again, Mr. James. We've talked enough about that. You may say it's weakness — I call it a proper pride. I don't mind going with a pie to the bakehouse — don't much mind answering the milk — but I can't quite forget what I came of — no, nothing on earth should compel me to take in the cat's-meat. Pride must stop somewhere; and till my dying day, I stop at cat's-meat."

"Well, I'm very glad, Miss Canary, I'm not your mouser, — that's all," said Jem; who was interrupted in further speech by the sudden appearance of his wife, who, somewhat flustered, yet with laughter playing about her mouth, bounced into the room.

"Jem," she cried, "who do you think's coming? And who do you think" — and here she approached her husband, and was about to whisper in his ear, when Jem drew himself majestically back.

"Mrs. Aniseed," he said, somewhat sternly, "you've no more manners than a poll parrot."

"Don't mind me," said Miss Canary rising. "I'll go upon the landing for a minute."

"Don't stir a foot, Ma'am," cried Jem, jumping up and handing her the chair; then turning to his wife — "And this is your breeding, — to whisper company out o' your room! What have you got to say?"

"Well, then, nothing but this — Kitty's down stairs, come to tea. And she's brought somebody with her," said Mrs. Aniseed.

"Well, poor soul! I hope it's a sweetheart: she's been a long while looked over, and I hope her time's come at last. Does he look like a sweetheart? You women can tell that," said Jem.

"I don't know, I'm sure," answered Mrs. Aniseed, and she burst into a loud laugh. At the same moment, Kitty Muggs entered the room all smiles and good-humour, shaking hands with Bright Jem, and her esteemed acquaintance, Miss Canary; who, more than once, had sunk the recollection of her ladylike origin, and visited the kitchen of St. James's as an especial guest of Kitty's.

"I never saw you look so charming, Kitty — well, that bonnet does become you," said Miss Canary. "And what a sweet riband!"

"Why, Kitty, there is mischief in the wind, I'm certain," said Jem. "You've got somebody tight at

keep your gunpowder. I don't make my bowels a place for stolen goods, I can tell you."

"Stolen goods, Mr. Aniseed," cried Kitty, "stolen, why, it was only taken." Jem, inexorable, shook his head. "Well, you are such a strange man, and have such strange words for things!"

"No, Kitty," answered Jem; "it's having the right words for things, that makes 'em seem strange to you. I've told you this afore; now, don't you try it again."

Mrs. Aniseed, to divert this little contest, bustled about with unwonted energy! ringing the cups and saucers, and then calling out loudly for a volunteer to toast the muffins. "Permit me, marm," said Cesar, with exuberant politeness; the while Mrs. Aniseed drew back the toasting-fork, declaring she could by no manner of means "allow of such a thing."

"Let him do it; he toasts beautiful," cried Kitty; and Cesar gained his wish.

"Scuse my back, marm," said Cesar, as, stooping to the fire, he turned his shoulders towards Miss Canary.

"Always as he is now," said Kitty in a whisper to Miss Canary, "good-tempered as any dog." And then she furtively pressed the forbidden gunpowder tea upon the spinster, assuring her that the queen didn't drink such. Reader, your indulgence for human frailty. Miss Canary, forgetful of her ladyhood, pocketed the stolen goods with the serenity of innocence.

"And so you're a going to the play, Kitty, you and Mr. Cesar? Well, I think we shall have a good house. Of course, you go to our shop?" said Jem. "A deep tragedy to-night. All the better for you, Miss Canary, isn't it? Well, I never could make it

out; that folks should suck more oranges, and drink more beer at a tragedy, than any other thing."

"It's their feelings, Jem," said Mrs. Aniseed.

"Well, I suppose it is. Just as folks eat and drink as they do at a funeral. When the feelings are stirred up they must have something to struggle with, and so they go to eating and drinking."

"Romeo and Juliet's always worth three shillings more to me than any other play," said Miss Canary, gradually reconciled to the black by the gunpowder. "Oranges relieve the heart."

"No doubt on it," said Jem. "Though I don't often look inside the house, still I have seen 'em in the front row of the gallery — a whole lot of full-grown women — sucking and crying, like broken-hearted babbies."

"We're all a going to-night, Jem," said Kitty, "that is, all our people. My lord and my lady, and, for the first time in his life, the dear child. Oh, what a love of loves that babby is. But you remember him, Susan? you recollect the night he was born, don't you?"

"I should think I did," said Mrs. Aniseed. "That's the night, you know, Jem, I brought home that blessed infant."

"Blessed infant!" groaned Jem. "Ha! he was a blessed infant. And what is he now? Why, he looks as if he had been brought up by a witch, and played with nothing but devils. A little varmint! when he sometimes comes sudden upon me, he makes me gasp again; there does seem such a deal of knowing in his looks. You might thread a needle with his head, it looks so sharp. Poor little bit of muck! Ha!" and again Jem groaned.

"Ha! the Lord knows what will become of him," cried Mrs. Aniseed.

"I know what will become of him," said Jem; "the gallows will become of him — that's as plain as rope."

"Well, Mr. James," said Miss Canary — "and if they will — a little more sugar, please — if they will. these little wretches, rush to destruction, what's to be done with 'em?"

"Rush to destruction!" cried Jem indignantly — "pushed, driven to destruction, you mean. Now, look at that little chap — see what he's gone through. I wonder he isn't as full of wrinkles as a monkey. He wasn't above six months old when we had him. Well, they took him from us; to be sure we'd no right to him; there was his own mother, and — no matter for that. They took him from us; and for a twelvemonth after that — I've seen him now in one woman's lap, now in another's, with his pretty plump face every week getting thinner and thinner — poor little wretch! — as though, babby as it was, it knew something of the wickedness that was going on about it, and days counted double days upon it. There looked a something horribly sensible in the child — a knowingness that was shocking, crowded as it was into its bit of a farthing face. Well, so it went on for about two years. And then, I've seen it barefoot in the mud, and heard it screaming its little pipe like a whistle, a singing ballads. And then, when it wasn't four years old, I've seen the child with matches in his hand; and I've heard him lie and beg, and change his voice up and down, and down and up — lord! it has made my blood turn like water to hear such cunning in a little

cretur that natur meant to be as innocent as heaven. Well, and now what is he? At seven years old, what is he? Why, that little head of his is full of wasps as July. Now and then, a sort of look comes back upon his face, as if it was a good angel looking in it, — and then, away it goes, and there's a imp of wickedness, grinning and winking at you."

"I hope we shall be in time to get a good place," said Kitty, to whom the history of young St. Giles seemed a very low and wicked business. "I want to get in the front row, because I do want to see how that precious cretur, that dear angel, young master, likes it. Sweet fellow! They say he's so sensible -- shouldn't wonder if he knows every bit about it to-morrow. There never was such a child as that in the world."

"What! young St. James, eh? Well, he ought to be a nice little chap," said Jem. "He's lived the life of a flower; with nothing to do, but to let himself be nursed and coddled. He hasn't had nothing to iron the dimples out of him yet. Howsomever, I shall have a look at him to-night, when I call the carriage."

A few minutes more elapsed, and then there was a general move towards the theatre. Miss Canary, having suffered a promise to be tortured from her that she would visit Kitty at the West-end, left Short's Gardens to prepare her basket in the gallery. Bright Jem, having heartily shaken Cesar's hand — Cesar had remained silent as night during his visit, though he looked and smiled all kind of grateful eloquence — departed on his customary duty: and Kitty had then nothing to do, but to persuade her sister to accom-

pany her and Cesar to the house. "I'll pay for you, Susan, so you needn't mind the expense," said Kitty.

"Oh, it isn't that," said Mrs. Aniseed, "not at all that, but —"

"Well, then, what can it be? Jem says you may go if you like, and I can see nothing to prevent you."

No, Kitty; you cannot see. Your eyes are lost in your heart, and you cannot see a footman of most objectionable blackness — a human blot — an ignominious stain that the prejudices of your sister, kind, cordial soul as she is, shrink from as from something dangerous to respectability. You, Kitty, cannot see this. You merely look upon Cesar Gum — the only creature of all the ten thousand thousand men, who in your pilgrimage through life, has ever proffered to you the helping of his arm, who has ever stammered, trembled, smiled at your look, and run like a hound at your voice — you merely see in him a goodness, a sympathy that you have yearned for; and, for the tint of the virtue, you see not that: to you it may be either black, red, or white. Certainly so much has the fire of your heart absorbed the colour of your slave, that to you black Cesar Gum is fair as Ganymede. Sweet magician Love! Mighty benevolence, Cupid, that takes away stains and blots — that gives the line of beauty to zig-zag, upturned noses — that smiles, a god of enchantment, in all eyes however green, blinking, or stone-like — that gives a pouting prettiness even to a hare-lip, bending it like Love's own bow! Great juggler, Cupid, that from his wings shakes precious dust in mortal eyes; and lo! they see nor blight, nor deformity, nor stain; or see them

turned to ornament; even, as it is said, the pearl of an oyster is only so much oyster disease. Plutus has been called a grand decorator. He can but gild ugliness; passing off the thing for its brightness. But Love — Love can give to it the shape, and paint it with tints of his own mother. Plutus may, after all, be only a maker of human pocket-pieces. He washes deformity with bright metal, and so puts it off upon the near-sighted; now Love is an alchemist, and will, at least to the eyes and ears of some *one*, turn the coarsest lump of clay to one piece of human gold. And it was Love that, passing his rose-tipped, baby fingers along the lids of Kitty Muggs, made her see white in black: it was Love that, to her vision, turned ebony to ivory.

“Didn’t you hear Jem say you might go?” again cried the unconscious Kitty.

“Shall be most happy, assure you marm,” said Cesar, clasping his hands, and raising them entreatingly. “Take great care of you, nebber fear.”

“Well, I will go,” said Mrs. Aniseed, her repugnance conquered by Cesar’s good temper; and in a few minutes — for Mrs. Aniseed possessed, perhaps, that highest and most valuable of all the female virtues, a virtue that Eve herself was certainly not born with, she was a quick dresser — in a few minutes the three were on their road to Covent Garden Theatre. A few minutes more, and they entered the gallery. All things portended a happy evening, for they were early enough for the front row; Mr. Cesar Gum taking his joyful seat between the ladies.

“Mind the bottle, dear,” said Kitty in a low voice to Cesar, who nodded; his eyes sparkling up at the

tender syllable. "Such a sweet drop of Madeary from our house, Susan; ha! ha! never mind Jem."

The gallery filled with holiday-makers and gallery wits. Miss Canary was soon hailed as an old acquaintance; every possible dignity being thrown, like roses, upon her. One apprentice begged to inquire of her, "When the Emperor of Chaney was coming over to marry her?" Another asked her, "What she'd take for her diamond ear-rings?" But beautiful was it to behold the nun-like serenity of Miss Canary. She moved among her scoffers, silent and stately, as the ghost of a departed countess. "I mind 'em no more," she observed, as in the course of her vocation she approached Mrs. Aniseed, "no more than the heads of so many door-knockers." Cesar mutely acquiesced in this wisdom; and in an evil hour for him, turning a wrathful face upon the revilers, he diverted all their sport from Miss Canary to himself. "Bill," cried one, "isn't it going to thunder? It looks so very black." "I wish I was a nigger," roared another, "then I'd be a black rose atween a couple of lilies, too." And then other pretty terms, such as "snowball," "powder-puff," were hurled at Cesar, who sat and grinned in helpless anger at the green curtain. And then poor Mrs. Aniseed! she shifted on her seat, and felt as if that terrible burning-glass which brings into a focus the rays of "the eyes of all the world" was upon her, and she was being gradually scorched to tinder. At length the tragedy, "George Barnwell," began. Kitty was now melted by George; and now put in fever-heat by Millwood, of whom, leaning back to speak to Mrs. Aniseed, she confidently observed,

"I'd have such creturs tore by wild osses." To this Mrs. Aniseed, reciprocating the humanity, curtly replied, "And so would I, dear."

The second act passed, when Kitty exclaimed, in a spasm of delight, "There he is; there's little master. Look at him, Susan — a sweet cretur," and Kitty pointed out a beautiful child, who, with its mother and father, had just entered the boxes. The child was superbly dressed, and when he entered wore a white beaver hat, with a large plume of pink and white feathers. "There he is," again cried Kitty; "we must drink his health." Whereupon Cesar produced the bottle, and the health of young St. James — he all the while unconscious of the honour — was drunk in Madeira from his paternal dwelling.

The play proceeded, and Kitty wept and sucked oranges — and wept, and snifted salts, and fifty times declared it was too deep; she'd never come again — and then sucked another orange — and then, when the play was over, said she was glad it was done, though she had never enjoyed herself half so much. And then she said, "After all, I think a good cry sometimes does us good; it makes us remember we are human creturs. But oh, that Millwood, Susan. When women are bad — to be sure it's so very seldom! — I'm afraid they beat the men." Every tear, however, shed by Kitty at the play, was recompensed by a roaring laugh at the farce. And, at length, brimful of happiness — all being over — the party rose to go home. "Let's see 'em get into the carriage — they needn't see us," said Kitty; and hurriedly they quitted the gallery, and ran round to the box-door.

Bright Jem was in the very heat of action; his mouth musical with noblest names. Dukes, Marquesses, and Earls fell from his lips, as he called carriage after carriage.

"Marquess of St. James's carriage," at length he cried with peculiar emphasis; and a superb equipage rolled to the door. The Marquess and Marchioness entered the vehicle, and a footman, lifting in the child, in his awkwardness knocked off the boy's superb hat: it rolled along the stones, and — was gone.

There was a sudden astonishment, and then a sudden cry of "Stop thief!" Constables, and Cesar, who with Mrs. Aniseed and Kitty, had been looking on, gave chase; and in a few minutes returned with the hat and the culprit, who, as it appeared, darting from under the horses' legs to the pavement, had caught up the property.

"Here's the hat, my lord," cried a constable, "and here's the little thief."

"Lord have mercy on us!" cried Mrs. Aniseed, "if it isn't that wretched child!"

"I know'd it! I always said it," cried Jem, almost broken-hearted. "I know'd he'd come to it — I know'd it!"

It was even so. Young St. Giles was the robber of young St. James.

CHAPTER V.

SHORT was the distance from Covent Garden Theatre to Covent Garden watch-house; and, therefore, in a few minutes was a young St. Giles arraigned before the night-constable. Cesar Gum had followed the offender as an important witness against him; whilst Bright Jem and his wife attended as sorrowing friends of the prisoner. Kitty Muggs was of the party; and her indignation at the wrong committed "on so blessed a baby" — we mean, of course, St. James — would have burst forth in loudest utterance had she not been controlled by the moral influence of Bright Jem. Hence, she had only the small satisfaction of declaring, in a low voice, to her sister, "that the little wretch would be sure to be hanged — for he had the gibbet, every bit of it, in his countenance." With this consolation, she suffered herself to be somewhat painful. "The Lord help him!" cried Mrs. Aniseed. "Well, you ought to be ashamed of yourself to say such a thing!" whispered Kitty Muggs.

Bright Jem was sad and silent. As Cesar, with unusual glibness, narrated the capture of the prisoner with the stolen property upon him, poor Jem, shading his eyes with his hand, looked mournfully at the pigmy culprit. Not a word did Jem utter; but the heart-ache spoke in his face.

"And what have you got to say to this?" asked

the night-constable of St. Giles. "You're a young gallows-bird, you are; hardly out of the shell, yet. What have you got to say?"

"Why, I didn't take the at," answered young St. Giles, fixing his sharp black eyes full on the face of his interrogator, and speaking as though he repeated an old familiar lesson, "I didn't take it: the at rolled to me; and I thought as it had tumbled out of a coach as was going on, and I run arter it, and calling out, if nobody had lost a at, when that black gentleman there laid hold on me, and said as how I stole it. How could I help it, if the at would roll to me? I didn't want the at."

"Ha!" said the constable, "there's a good deal of wickedness crammed into that little skin of yours — I shall lock you up. There — go in with you," and the constable pointed to a cell, the door of which was already opened for the reception of the prisoner.

And did young St. Giles quail or whimper at his prison threshold? Did his young heart sink at the gloomy dungeon? Oh no. Child as he was, it was plain he felt that he was acting a part: he had become in some way important, and he seemed resolved to rise with the occasion. He had listened to tales of felon fortitude, of gallows heroism; and ambition stirred within him. He had heard of the Tyburn humourist, who, with his miserable jest in the jaws of death, cast his shoes from the cart, to thwart an oft-told prophecy that he would die shod. All these stories St. Giles had listened to, and took to his heart as precious recollections. While other children had conned their books — and written maxim copies —

and learned their catechism, — St. Giles had learned this one thing — to be “game.” His world — the world of Hog Lane had taught him that; he had listened to the counsel from lips with the bloom of Newgate on them. The foot-pad, the pickpocket, the burglar, had been his teachers: they had set him copies, and he had written them in his brain for life-long wisdom. Other little boys had been taught to “love their neighbour as themselves.” Now, the prime ruling lesson set to young St. Giles was “honour among thieves.” Other boys might show rewarding medals — precious testimony of their schooltime work; young St. Giles knew nothing of these; had never heard of them; and yet unconsciously he showed what to him was best evidence of his worth: for at the door of his cell, he showed that he was “game.” Scarcely was he bidden to enter the dungeon, than he turned his face up to the constable, and his eyes twinkling and leering, and his little mouth quivering with scorn, he said — “You don’t mean it, Mister; I know you don’t mean it?”

“Come, in with you, ragged and sarcy!” cried the constable.

“Well, then,” said the urchin, “here goes — good night to you,” and so saying, he flung a summerset into the cell: the lock was turned, and Bright Jem — fetching a deep groan — quitted the watch-house, his wife, sobbing aloud, and following him.

“What can they do to the poor child?” asked Mrs. Aniseed of Jem, as the next morning he sat silent and sorrowful, with his pipe in his mouth, looking at the fire.

“Why, Susan, that’s what I was thinking of.

What can they do with him? He isn't old enough to hang; but he's quite big enough to be whipped. Bride-well and whipping; yes that's it; that's how they'll teach him. They'll make Jack Ketch his schoolmaster; and nicely he'll learn him his lesson towards Tyburn. The old story, Susan — the old story," and Jem drew a long sigh.

"Don't you think, Jem, something might be done to send him to sea? He'd get taken away from the bad people about him, and who knows, might after all turn out a bright man." Such was the hopeful faith of Mrs. Aniseed.

"Why, there's something in that to be sure. For my part, I think that's a good deal what the sea was made for — to take away the offal of the land. He might get cured at sea; if we could get anybody as would take him. I'm told the sea does wonders, sometimes, with the morals of folks. I've heard of thieves and rogues of all sorts, that once aboard ship, have come round 'straordinary. Now, whether it's in the salt water or the bo'swains, who shall say? He wouldn't make a bad drummer, neither, with them little quick fists of his, if we could get him in the army."

"Oh, I'd rather he was sent to sea, Jem," cried Mrs. Aniseed, "then he'd be out of harm's way."

"Oh, the army reforms all sorts of rogues, too," averred Jem. "Sometimes they get their morals pipeclayed, as well as their clothes. Wonderful what heroes are made of, sometimes. You see, I suppose, there's something in some parts of the trade that agrees with some folks. When they storm a town now, and take all they can lay their hands on, why

there's all the pleasure of the robbery without any fear of the gallows. It's stealing made glorious with flags and drums. Nobody knows how that little varmint might get on."

Here Jem was interrupted by the sudden appearance of a woman hung with rags and looking prematurely old. Misery and vice were in her face, though the traces of evil were for the time softened by sorrow. She was weeping bitterly, and with clasped, trembling hands, ran into the room. It was the wretched mother of young St. Giles; the miserable woman who more than six years before had claimed her child in that room; who had borne her victim babe away to play its early part in wretchedness and deceit. She had since frequently met Jem, but always hurried from him. His reproofs, though brief, were too significant, too searching, for even her shame to encounter. "Oh, Jem! Jem!" she cried, "save my dear child — save my innocent lamb."

"Ha! and if he isn't innocent," cried Jem, "whose fault's that?"

"But he is — he is," screamed the woman. "You won't turn agin him, too? He steal anything! A precious cretur! he might be trusted with untold gold!"

"Woman," said Jem, "I wouldn't like to hurt you in your trouble; but havn't you no shame at all? Don't you know what a bit of truth is, that even now you should look in my face, and tell me such a wicked lie?"

"I don't, Jem — I don't," vociferated the woman. "He's as innocent as the babe unborn."

"Why, so he is, as far as he knows what's right

and what's wrong. He has innocence: that is, the innocence you've taught him. 'Teach a child the way he should go," cried Jem, in a tone of some bitterness, "and you've taught him the way to Newgate. The Lord have mercy on you! What a sweet babby he was, when six year and a half ago you took him from this room, — and what is he now? Well, well, I won't pour water on a drowned mouse," said Jem, the woman crying more vehemently at his rebuke, "but how you can look in that child's face, and arterwards look up at heaven, I don't know."

"There's no good, not a ha'porth in all this preaching. All we want to know is this. Can you help us to get the young 'un out o' trouble." This reproof and interrogation were put in a hoarse sawing voice by a man of about five-and-thirty, who had made his appearance shortly after St. Giles's mother. He was dressed in a coat of Newgate cut. His hat was knowingly slanted over one eyebrow, his hands were in his pockets, and at short intervals he sucked the stalk of a primrose that shone forth in strong relief from the black whiskers and week's beard surrounding it.

"And who are you?" asked Jem, in a tone not very encouraging of a gentle answer.

"That's a good un, not to know me. My name's Blast — Tom Blast; not ashamed of my name," said the owner, still champing the primrose.

"No, I dare say not," answered Bright Jem. "Oh, I know you now. I've seen you with the boy a singing ballads."

"I should think so. And what on it? No disgrace in that, eh? I look upon myself as respectable

as any of your folks as sing at your fine play-house. What do we all pipe for but money? Only there's this difference; they gets pounds — and I gets half-pence. A singer for money's a singer for money, — whether he stands upon mud or a carpet. But all's one for that. What's to be done for the boy? I tell his mother here not to worry about it — 'twont be more than a month or two at Bridewell, for he's never been nabbed afore: but it's no use a talking to women, you know; she won't make her life happy, no how. So we've come to you."

"And what can I do?" asked Jem — "I'm not judge and jury, am I?"

"Why, you know Capstick, the muffin-man. Well, he's a householder, and can put in a good word for the boy with the beak. I suppose you know what a beak is?" said Thomas Blast, with a satirical twist of the lip. "Not too fine a gentleman to know that?"

"Why, what does Capstick know of little St. Giles?" asked Jem.

"Oh, Jem," said the woman, "yesterday he stood his friend. He's a strange cretur, that Capstick; and often does a poor soul a good turn, as if he'd eat him up all the while. Well, yesterday arternoon, what does he do but give my precious child — my innocent babe — two dozen muffins, a basket and a bell."

"I see," cried Jem, with glistening eyes, "set him up in trade. God bless that muffin-man!"

"That's what he meant, Jem; but it wasn't to be — it wasn't to be," cried the woman with a sigh.

"No — it warn't," corroborated Mr. Blast. "You see the young un — all agog as he was — brought the muffins to the lane. Well, we hadn't had two dinners, I can tell you, yesterday; so we sells the basket and the bell for sixpenn'orth of butter, and didn't we go to work at the muffins." And Mr. Blast seemingly spoke with a most satisfactory recollection of the banquet.

"And if they'd have pisoned all of you, served you right," cried Jem, with a look of disgust. "You *will* kill that child — you won't give him a chance — you will kill him body and soul."

"La, Jem! how can you go on in that way?" cried the mother, and began to weep anew. "He's the apple of my eye, is that dear child."

"None the better for that by the look of 'em," said Jem. "Howsomever, I'll go to Mr. Capstick. Mind, I don't want neither of you at my heels; what I'll do — I'll do by myself," and without another word, Bright Jem took his cap, and unceremoniously passing his visitors, quitted the room. His wife, looking coldly at the new comers, intimated a silent wish that they would follow him. The look was lost upon Mr. Blast, for he immediately seated himself; and seizing the poker, with easiest familiarity beat about the embers. Mrs. Aniseed was a heroic woman. Nobody who looked at her, whilst her visitor rudely disturbed her coals, could fail to perceive the struggle that went on within her. There are housewives whose very heartstrings seem connected with their pokers; and Mrs. Aniseed was of them. Hence, whilst her visitor beat about the grate, it was at once a hard and delicate task for her not to spring upon him, and

wrest the poker from his hand. She knew it not, but at that moment the gentle spirit of Bright Jem was working in her; subduing her aroused passion with a sense of hospitality.

"A sharp spring this, for poor people, isn't it, Mrs. Aniseed?" observed Mr. Blast. "It seems quite the tail of a hard winter, doesn't it?" Mrs. Aniseed tried to smile a smile — she only shivered it. "Well, I must turn out, I s'pose; though I havn't nothing to do till night — then I think I shall try another murder: it's a long while since we've had one."

"A matter of two months," said the mother of St. Giles, "and that turned out no great things."

"Try a murder," said Mrs. Aniseed, with some apprehension, "what do you mean?"

"Oh, there'll be no blood spilt," answered Mr. Blast, "only a bit of Grub-street, that's all. But I don't know what's come to the people. They don't snap as they used to do. Why, there's that Horrible and Particular Account of a Bear that was fed upon Young Children in Westminster: I've known the time when I've sold fifty of 'em afore I'd blown my horn a dozen times. Then there was that story of the Lady of Fortin that had left Twins in the Cradle, and run off with her Husband's Coachman — that was a sure crown for a night's work. Only a week ago it didn't bring me a groat. I don't know how it is; people get sharper and sharper, as they get wickedder and wickedder."

"And you don't think it no harm, then," said Mrs. Aniseed, "to make bread of such lies?"

"What does it signify, Mrs. Aniseed, what your bread's made on, so as it's a good colour, and plenty

of it? Lord bless you! if you was to take away all the lies that go to make bread in this town, you'd bring a good many peck loaves down to crumbs, you would. What's the difference between me and some folks in some newspapers? Why this: I sells my lies myself, and they sell 'em by other people. But I say, Mrs. Aniseed, it *is* cold, isn't it?"

Mrs. Aniseed immediately jumped at the subtle purpose of the question; and only replied — "It is."

"A drop o' something wouldn't be bad such a mornin' as this, would it?" asked the unabashed guest.

"La! Tom," cried St. Giles's mother, in a half-tone of astonishment and deprecation.

"I can't say," said Mrs. Aniseed; "but it might be for them as like it. I should suppose, though, that this woman — if she's got anything of a mother's heart in her — is thinking of something else, a good deal more precious than drink."

"You may say that," said the woman, lifting her apron to her unwet eye.

"And, there's a good soul, do — do when you get the dear child home again — do keep him out of the streets; and don't let him go about singing of ballads, and —"

"That's all mighty fine, Mrs. Aniseed," said Mr. Blast, who foiled in his drink, became suddenly independent in his language, — "all mighty fine: but, after all, I should think singing ballads a little more genteel than bawling for coaches, and making dirty money out of fogs, and pitch and oakum. A ballad-singer may hold his head up with a linkman any day — and so you may tell Jem, when you see him.

Come along," and Mr. Blast twitched the woman by the arm — "come along: there's nothing to be got here but preaching — and that will come in time to all of us."

"Don't mind what he says," whispered St. Giles's mother to Mrs. Aniseed, "he's a good cretur, and means nothing. And oh, Mrs. Aniseed, do all you can with Mr. Capstick for my innocent babe, and I sha'n't say my prayers without blessing you." With this the unwelcome visitors departed.

We must now follow Bright Jem to the house of the muffin-man. Jem had already told his errand to Mr. Capstick; who, with evident sorrow and disappointment at his heart, is endeavouring to look like a man not at all surprised by the story related to him. Oh dear no! he had quite expected it. "As for what I did, Mr. Aniseed" — said Capstick — "I did it with my eyes open. I knew the little vagabond was a lost wretch — I could read that in his face; and then the muffins were somewhat stale muffins — so don't think I was tricked. No: I looked upon it as something less than a forlorn hope, and I won't flatter myself; but you see I was not mistaken. Nevertheless, Mr. Aniseed, say nothing of the matter to my wife. She said — not knowing my thoughts on the business — she said I was a fool for what I did: so don't let her know what's happened. When women find out they're right, it makes 'em conceited. The little ruffian!" cried Capstick with bitterness — "to go stealing when the muffins might have made a man of him."

"Still, Mr. Capstick," urged Jem, "there's something to be said for the poor child. His mother and the bad uns in Hog Lane wouldn't let him have a

chance. For when St. Giles ran home — what a place to call home! — they seized upon the muffins, and turning the bell and basket into butter, swallowed 'em without so much as winking."

"Miserable little boy!" exclaimed the softened Capstick, — and then he groaned, "Wicked wretches!"

"That's true again," said Jem: "and yet hunger hardly knows right from wrong, Mr. Capstick."

Capstick made no answer to this, but looking in Jem's face, drew a long breath.

"And about the boy?" said Jem, "he's but a chick, is he, to go to gaol?"

"It's no use — it's all no use, Mr. Aniseed; we're only throwing away heaven's time upon the matter; for if the little rascal was hanged at once — to be sure, he is a little young for that — nevertheless I was about to say," — and here the muffin-man, losing the thread of his thoughts, twitched his cap from his head, and passed it from right hand to left, and from left to right, as though he thought in such exercise to come plump again upon the escaped idea — "I have it," at length he cried. "I was about to say, as I've an idle hour on hand, I'll walk with you to Lord St. James, and we'll talk to him about the matter."

Now Bright Jem believed this of himself; that in a good cause he would not hesitate — at least not much — to speak to his Majesty, though in his royal robes and with his royal crown upon his head. Nevertheless, the ease, the perfect self-possession, with which Capstick suggested a call upon the Marquess of St. James obtained for him a sudden respect from the linkman. To be sure, as we have before indicated,

there was something strange about Capstick. His neighbours had clothed him with a sort of mystery; hence, on second thoughts, Bright Jem believed it possible that in happier days the muffin-man might have talked to marquesses.

"Yes," said Capstick, taking off his apron, "we'll see what can be done with his lordship. I'll just whip on my coat of audience, and — hush! — my wife," and Mrs. Capstick stirred in the back parlour. "Not a word where we're going. Not that I care a straw; only she'd say I was neglecting the shop for a pack of vagabonds: and perhaps she's right, though I wouldn't own it. Never own a woman's right; do it once, and on the very conceit of it, she'll be always wrong for the rest of her life." With this apophthegm, the muffin-maker quitted the shop, and immediately his wife entered it.

"Glad to see your sister looking so well, Mr. Aniseed," said Mrs. Capstick, somewhat silyly.

"Oh! what, you mean Kitty? Why, she looks as well as she can, and that isn't much, poor soul," said Jem.

"She was here yesterday, and bought some muffins. A dark gentleman was with her," said Mrs. Capstick.

"You mean the black footman," observed Jem, dropping at once to the cold, hard truth.

"Well," and Mrs. Capstick giggled, as though communicating a great moral discovery, "well, there's no accounting for taste, is there, Mr. Aniseed?"

"No," said Jem, "it was never meant to be accounted for, I suppose; else there's a lot of us would have a good deal to answer about. Taste, in some

things, I suppose, was given us to do what we like with; but, Mrs. Capstick, now and then we do sartainly ill-use the privilege."

"Lor, Mr. Capstick! where are you going so fine?" asked his spouse of the muffin-maker, as he presented himself in his best coat, and swathed in a very voluminous neckcloth. "Going to court?"

"You see," said Capstick, "a man — a wretch, a perjurer, is to-day put in the pillory."

"And what's that to you, Mr. Capstick?" asked his wife.

"Why, Mary Anne, as a moral man — and, therefore, as a man who respects his oath, I feel it my duty to go and enjoy my egg." With this excuse — worthy of a Timon — did the muffin-maker take his way towards the mansion of Lord St. James. "It's a hard thing, said Capstick on the road, "a hard thing, that you can't always tell a wife the truth."

"I always tell it to my old woman," observed bright Jem.

"You're a fortunate man, Sir," said Capstick. "All women can't bear it: it's too strong for 'em. Now, Mrs Capstick is an admirable person — a treasure of a wife — never know what it is to want a button to my shirt, never — still, I am now and then obliged to sacrifice truth on the altar of conjugal peace. It makes my heart bleed to do it, Mr. Aniseed: but sometimes it *is* done."

Bright Jem nodded as a man will nod who thinks he catches a meaning, but is not too sure of it. "And what will you say?" asked Jem, after a moment's pause — "what will you say to his lordship, if he'll see you?"

Mr. Capstick cast a cold, self-complacent eye upon the linkman, and replied — "I shall trust to my inspiration." Jem softly whistled — unconscious of the act. Mr. Capstick heard, what he deemed a severe comment, and majestically continued: "Mr. Aniseed, you may not imagine it — but I have a great eye for gingerbread."

"No doubt on it, Mr. Capstick," said Jem, "it's a part of your business."

"You don't understand me," replied the muffin-maker with a compassionate smile. "I mean, my good man, the gingerbread that makes up so much of this world. Bless your heart; I pride myself upon my eye, that looks at once through all the gilding — all the tawdry, glittering Dutch metal — that covers the cake, and goes at once to the flour and water."

"I don't see what you mean, by no means," said Jem; "that is, not quite."

"Look here, Sir," said Capstick, with the air of a man who had made himself up for an oration. "What is that pile of brick before us?"

"Why that you know as well as me," answered Jem; "it's St. James's Palace."

"And there lives his gracious Majesty, George the Third. Now, I dare say, Mr. Aniseed, it's very difficult for you to look upon his Majesty in what I shall beg leave to call a state of nature?"

"What! like an injun?" asked Jem. "Well, I must say, I can hardly fancy it."

"Of course not. When you hear of a king, he comes upon you in velvet and fur, and with a crown upon his head — and diamonds blazing upon him — and God knows how many rows of lords about

him — and then all the household guards — and the state coach — and the state trumpets, and the thundering guns, and the ringing bells — all come upon your mind as a piece and parcel of him, making a king something tremendous to consider — something that you can only think of with a kind of fright. Is it not so?" asked the muffin-maker.

Jem merely answered — "Go on, Mr. Capstick."

"Now I feel nothing of the sort, I know the world, and despise it," said the muffin-maker.

"I'll take your word for anything but that," cried Jem. "But go on."

"I tell you, Sir, I hate the world," repeated Capstick, proud of what he thought his misanthropy: "and of sweet use has such hatred been to me."

Bright Jem cast an incredulous leer at the muffin-man. "I never heard of the sweetness of hatred afore. I should as soon looked for honey in a wasp's nest."

"Ha! Jem, you know nothing; else you'd know how a contempt for the world sharpens a man's wits, and improves his eyesight. Bless you! there are a thousand cracks and flaws and fly-spots upon everything about us, that we should never see without it," said Capstick.

"Well, thank God! I'm in no need of such spectacles," said Bright Jem.

"And for that very reason, Jem," said the muffin-maker, "you are made an every-day victim of — for that reason your very soul goes down upon its knees to things that it's my especial comfort to despise. You haven't the wit, the judgment, to separate a man from all his worldly advantages, and look at him, as I may say, in his very nakedness — a mere man.

Now Jem, that is the power I especially pride myself upon. Hence," continued the muffin-maker, and he brought himself up fronting the palace, and extended his right arm towards it — "hence I can take an emperor from his crowd of nobles — his troops — his palace walls — his royal robes, — and set him before me just as God made him. As I'd take a cocoa-nut, and tear away the husk, and crack the shell, and pare the inner rind, and come at once upon the naked kernel, — so, Mr. Aniseed, can I take, — aye the Great Mogul, — and set him in his shivering flesh before me."

"And you think the knack to do this does you good?" modestly inquired Bright Jem.

"It's my solace, my comfort, my strength," answered the muffin-maker. "And this knack, as you have it, is what I call seeing through the gold upon the gingerbread. Now, isn't it dreadful to think of the thousands upon thousands who every day go down upon their knees to it, believing the gilded paste so much solid metal? Ha, Mr. Aniseed! we talk a good deal about the miserable heathen: the poor wretches who make idols of crocodiles and monkies, — but Lord bless us! only to think in this famous city of London of the thousands of Christians, as they call themselves, who after all are idolaters of gilt gingerbread!"

"Poor souls!" said Jem, "in the fulness of his charity, "they don't know any better. But you haven't answered what I asked; and that's this. What will you say to his lordship if he'll see you?"

"Say to him? I shall talk reason to him. Bless you! I shall go straight at the matter. When some

folks go to speak to rich and mighty lords, they fluster, and stammer, as if they couldn't make themselves believe that they only look upon a man made like themselves; no, they somehow mix him up with his lands and his castles, and his heaps of money, — and the thought's too big for 'em to bear. But I will conclude as I began, Mr. Aniseed. Therefore I say I have a great eye for gilt gingerbread."

This philosophical discourse brought the talkers to their destination. Jem stooped before the kitchen-windows, prying curiously through them. "What seek you there, Jem?" asked Capstick.

"I was thinking," answered Jem, "if I could only see Kitty, we might go in through the kitchen."

Mr. Capstick made no answer, — but looking a lofty reproof at Jem, he took two strides to the door, and seizing the knocker, struck it with an assertion of awakened dignity. "Through the hall, Mr. Aniseed; through the hall; no back-stairs influence for me." As he made this proud declaration, the door was opened; and to the astonishment of the porter, the muffin-maker asked the porter, as coolly as though he was cheapening pippins at an apple-stall — "Can we see the Marquess?"

The porter had evidently a turn for humour: he was *not* one of those janitors who, seated in their leathern chairs, resent every knock at the door as a violation of their peace and comfort. Therefore, curling the corners of his mouth, he asked in a tone of comic remonstrance, — "Now what *do* you want with the Marquess?"

"That the Marquess shall be benefited by knowing," answered Capstick. "There is my name;" and

the muffin-maker, with increasing dignity, handed his shop-card to the porter.

"It's no use," said the porter, shaking his head at the card, — "not a bit of use. We don't eat muffins here."

At this moment, Cesar Gum, the African footman, appeared in the hall, and with greatest cordiality welcomed Bright Jem. "Come to see Kitty? — she delight to see you — come down tairs."

"Will you take this to the Marquess?" and twitching his card from the porter's fingers, Capstick gave it to Cesar. The black felt every disposition to oblige the friend of Kitty's brother, but raised his hands and shook his head with a hopeless shake. "Stop," said Capstick. He took the card, and wrote some words on the back of it. He then returned it to the porter.

"Oh!" cried the porter, when he had read the mystic syllables. "Cesar, I 'spose you must take it," and Cesar departed on the errand.

CHAPTER VI.

Now, we hope that we have sufficiently interested the reader, to make him wish to know the magic words which, operating on the quickened sense of a nobleman's porter, caused him suddenly to put a marquess and a muffin-maker in communication. What Open Sesame could it be, that written by a St. Giles, should be worthy of the attention of St. James? Great is the power of letters! Whirlwinds have been let loose — fevers quenched, and Death himself made to drop his uplifted dart — by the subtle magic of some brief *lex scripta*, some *abracadabra* that held in the fluid some wondrous spirits, always to be found, like motes in the sunbeams, in a magician's ink-bottle. Mighty is the power of words! Wondrous their agency — their volatility. Otherwise how could Pythagoras, writing words in bean-juice here upon the earth, have had the self-same syllables printed upon the moon? What a great human grief it is that this secret should have been lost! Otherwise what glorious means of publication would the moon have offered! Let us imagine the news of the day for the whole world written by certain scribes on the next night's moon — when she shone! What a blessed boon to the telescope-makers! How we should at once jump at all foreign news! How would the big-hearted men of America thereon publish their price-current of slaves — the new rate of the *pecunia viva*, the living

penny in God's likeness — as the market varied! And France, too, would sometimes with bloody pen write glory there, obscuring for a time the light of heaven, with the madness of man. And Poland, pale with agony, yet desperately calm, would write — "Patience, and wait the hour." And the scribes of St. Petersburg would placard "God and the Emperor" — blasphemous conjunction! And the old Pope would have his scrawl — and Indian princes, and half-plucked nabobs — and Chinamen — and Laplanders — and the Great Turk — and —

No — no! 'Thank heaven! the secret of Pythagoras — if indeed he ever had it, if he told not a magnificent flam — is lost; otherwise, what a poor scribbled moon it would be; its face wrinkled and scarred by thousands of quills — tattooed with what was once news — printed with playhouse bills and testimonials gracefully vouchsafed to corn-cutters! No. Thank God! Pythagoras safely dead, there is no man left to scrawl his pot-hooks on the moon. Her light — like too oft the light of truth — is not darkened by quills.

And after this broomstick flight to the moon, descend we to the card of Capstick, muffin-maker. The words he wrote were simply these — "A native of Liquorish, with a vote for the borough."

Now, it is one of the graceful fictions of the English constitution — and many of its fictions no doubt pass for its best beauties, in the like manner that the fiction of false hair, false colour, false teeth, passes sometimes for the best loveliness of a tinkered face, — it is one of these fictions that the English peer never meddles with the making of a member of

the House of Commons. Not he. Let the country make its lower House of senators as it best may, the English peer will have no hand in the matter. He would as soon, in his daily walks, think of lifting a load upon a porter's back, as of helping to lift a commoner into his seat. We say, this is a fiction of the constitution; and beautiful in its influence upon the human mind, is fiction. Now, the Marquess of St. James had in his father's lifetime represented the borough of Liquorish. He was returned by at least a hundred and fifty voters as independent as their very limited number permitted them to be. The calumny of politics had said that the house of St. James carried the borough of Liquorish in its pocket, as easily as a man might in the same place carry a rotten apple or a rotten egg. Let the reader believe only as much of this as his charity will permit.

Now it oddly enough happened that, at the time when Capstick sought to approach the Marquess, parliament was near its dissolution. The wicked old hag was all but breathing her last, yet — case-hardened old sinner! — she expressed no contrition, showed no touch of conscience for her past life of iniquity; for her wrongs she had committed upon the weak and poor; for the nightly robberies upon them who toiled for the especial luxury of those who, like the tenants of a cheese, lived and crawled upon unearned pensions; she repented not of the blood she had shed in the wickedness of war; never called about her soft-hearted, tearful, most orthodox bishops, to assuage the agony of her remorse, and to cause her to make a clean breast of all her hidden iniquity. No. Parliament was about to expire — about to follow her sinful prede-

cessors (what horrid epitaphs has history written upon some of them!) and she heard no voice of conscience; all she heard was the chink of guineas pursed by bribery for her successor.

Even the Marquess's porter felt the coming of the new election. His fidelity to his master and his patriotism to merry England had been touched by a report that the borough of Liquorish was about to be invaded by some revolutionary spirit, resolved to snatch it from the time-honoured grasp of the house of St. James, and, at any cost, to wash it of the stain of bribery. Somebody had dared to say that he would sit for the independent borough of Liquorish though every voter should have a gold watch, and every voter's wife a silver tea-pot and diamond ear-rings. This intelligence was enough to make all true lovers of their country look about them. Therefore did the porter consider Mr. Capstick, although a muffin-man, a person of some importance to the Marquess. Capstick was a voter for the borough of Liquorish — that was bought and sold like any medlar — and consequently, to the mind of the porter, one of the essential parts of the British constitution: therefore, the porter was by no means astounded when Cesar returned with a message that Mr. Capstick was to follow him.

The muffin-maker passed along, in no way dazzled or astonished by the magnificence about him. He had made his mind up to be surprised at nothing. Arabian splendours — it was his belief — would have failed to disturb the philosophic serenity of his soul. He had determined, according to his own theory, to extract the man from the Marquess — to come, as he would say, direct at humanity divested of all its worldly

furniture. Bright Jem meekly followed the misanthrope, treading the floor with gentlest tread; and wondering at the freak of fortune that even for a moment had enabled him, a tenant of Short's Gardens, to enter such an abode. Bright Jem could not help feeling this, and at the same time feeling a sort of shame at the unexpected weakness. He had believed himself proof to the influence of grandeur, — nevertheless, he could not help it; he was somewhat abashed, a little flurried at the splendour around him. He was not ashamed of his poverty; yet he somehow felt that it had no business to intrude itself in such a paradise.

In a few minutes the muffin-maker and Jem found themselves in a magnificent library. Seated at a table was a short, elderly little man, dressed in black. His face was round as an apple. He had small, sharp, grey eyes, which for a few moments he levelled steadily at Capstick and Jem, and then suddenly shifted them in a way that declared all the innermost and dearest thoughts of the muffin-maker to be, in that glance, read and duly registered. "Pray be seated," said the gentleman; and Capstick heavily dropped himself into a velvet chair. Bright Jem, on the contrary, settled upon the seat lightly as a butterfly upon a damask rose: and like the butterfly, it seemed doubtful with himself, whether every moment he would not flutter off again. Capstick at once concluded that he was in the presence of the Marquess. Jem knew better, having seen the nobleman; but thought possibly it might be some earl or duke, a friend or relation of the family. However, both of them augured well of their mission, from the easy, half-cordial manner of the illustrious

gentleman in black. His words, too, were low and soft, as though breathed by a flute. He seemed the personification of gentleness and politeness. Nevertheless, reader, he was not of the peerage; being, indeed, nothing more than Mr. Jonathan Folder, librarian — and at times confidential agent — to the Marquess of St. James. He had just received the orders of his lordship to give audience on his behalf, to what might be an important deputation from the borough of Liquorish; hence, Mr. Folder, alive to the patriotic interest of his employer and friend — as, occasionally, he would venture to call the Marquess — was smiling and benignant.

“Mr. Capstick — I presume *you* are Mr. Capstick?” — and Mr. Folder with his usual sagacity, bowed to the muffin-maker — “we are glad to see you. This house is always open to the excellent and patriotic voters of Liquorish. There never was a time, Mr. Capstick, when it more behoved the friends of the Constitution to have their eyes about them. The British Constitution —”

“There is no constitution like it,” observed the muffin-maker drily.

“That’s an old truth, Mr. Capstick,” said Mr. Folder, “and, like all old truths, all the better for its age.”

“No constitution like it,” repeated the muffin-maker. “I don’t know how many times it hasn’t been destroyed since I first knew it — and still it’s all alive. The British Constitution, my lord, sometimes seems to me like an eel; you may flay it and chop it to bits; yet for all that, the pieces will twist and wriggle again.”

"It is one of its proud attributes, Mr. Capstick," said Folder, — doubtless he had not heard himself addressed as my lord — "one of the glories of the Constitution, that it is elastic — peculiarly elastic."

"And that's, I suppose, my lord," — surely Mr. Folder was a little deaf, — "that's why it gets mauled about so much. Just as boys don't mind what tricks they play upon cats — because, poor devils, somebody, to spite 'em, has said they've got nine lives. But, I beg your pardon, this is my friend — Mr. James Aniseed, — better known as Bright Jem," and Capstick introduced the linkman.

Mr. Folder slightly rose from his chair, and graciously bowed to Jem; who, touched by the courtesy, rose bolt upright; and then, after a moment's hesitation, he took half-a-dozen strides towards Mr. Folder, and — ere that gentleman was aware of the design — shook him heartily by the hand. Then, Jem, smiling and a little flushed, returned to his chair. Again taking his seat, he looked about him with a brightened, happy face, for Mr. Folder — the probable nobleman — had returned the linkman's grasp with a most cordial pressure.

"And, Mr. Aniseed," said Folder, "I presume you have also a voice in the constitution; you have a vote for —"

"Not a morsel, my lord," answered Jem. "I hav'n't a voice in anything; all I know about the constitution is that it means taxes; for you see, my lord, I've only one room and that's a little un — and so, you see, my lord, I've no right to nothing." Whilst Jem pursued this declaration, Mr. Folder, doubtless all unconsciously, rubbed his right hand with his hand-

kerchief. The member might, possibly, have caught some taint from the shake of a low man without a vote.

"Nevertheless, Mr. Capstick, we are happy to see you," said Folder, with a strong emphasis upon the pronoun. "Public morality — I mean the morality of the other party — is getting lower and lower. In fact, I should say, the world — that is, you know what part of the world I mean — is becoming worse and worse, baser and baser."

"There is no doubt of it, my lord," answered Capstick, — "for if your lordship —"

Capstick had become too emphatic. It was therefore necessary that Folder should correct him. "I am not his lordship. No, I am not," he repeated, not unobservant of the arched eyebrows of the muffin-maker: "I am deputed by his lordship to receive you, prepared to listen to your wishes, or to the wishes of any of the respectable constituents of the borough of Liquorish. We are not unaware, Mr. Capstick, of the movements of the enemy. But we shall be provided against them. They, doubtless, will be prepared to tamper with the independence of the electors, but as I have said," and Folder let his words fall slowly as though they were so many gems, "as I have said, there we can beat them on their own dirty grounds."

"There is no doubt whatever of it," said Capstick, "none at all. And then in these matters, there's nothing like competition, — nothing whatever. For my part, I must say, I like to see it — it does me good: an election, such an election as we have in Liquorish, is a noble sight for a man who, like myself, was born to sneer at the world. At such a time, I feel myself exalted."

"No doubt — no doubt," said Mr. Folder.

"Then I feel my worth, every penny of it, in what is called the social scale. For instance, now, I open the shop of my conscience, with the pride of a tradesman who knows he's got something in his window that people *must* buy. I have a handsome piece of perjury to dispose of —"

"Mr. Capstick! Perjury!" cried Folder, a little shocked.

"Why, you see, Sir," said Capstick, "for most things, there's two names — a holiday name, and a working-day name."

"That's true," said Jem — and then he added, with a bow to Folder, "saving your presence, Sir: quite true."

"Yes, I'm a voter with a perjury jewel to sell," said Capstick, "and, therefore, isn't it delightful to me, as a man who hates the world, to have fine gentlemen, honourable gentlemen, — yes, titled gentlemen, coming about me and chaffering with me for that little jewel — that, when they've bought it of me, they may sell it again at a thumping profit? The Marquess isn't that sort of man —"

"I should hope not, Mr. Capstick," said Folder, with a smile that seemed to add — impossible.

"Certainly not. But isn't it, I say, pleasant to a man-hater like me, to see this sort of dealing — to know that, however mean, and wicked, and rascally, the voter is who sells his jewel — he is taught the meanness, encouraged in the wickedness, and more than countenanced in the rascality, by the high and lofty fellow with the money-bag? Oh! in the school of corruption, ar'n't there some nice high-nob ushers?"

"Never mind that, Mr. Capstick," said Bright Jem, who began to fear for the success of their mission, if the muffin-maker thus continued to vindicate his misanthropy. "Never mind that. We can't make a sore any better by putting a plaster of bad words to it: never mind that; but, Mr. Capstick," said Jem, earnestly, "let's mind something else."

"Then I am to understand," said Mr. Folder, who, in his philosophy, had been somewhat entertained by the philippics of the muffin-maker, — "I am to understand, that your present business in no way relates to anything connected with the borough?"

"Not at present," said Capstick, "only I hope that his lordship won't forget I have a voice. Because —"

At this moment, the door flew open, and a child — a beautiful creature — gambolled into the room. It was young St. James. The very cherub, as Kitty Muggs would have called him, robbed by the iniquitous, the hopeless St. Giles. Truly he was a lovely thing. His fair, fresh young face, informed with the innocence, purity, and happiness of childhood, spoke at once to the heart of the beholder. What guilelessness was in his large blue eyes — what sweetness at his mouth — what a fair, white expanse of brow — adorned with clustering curls of palest gold! His words and laughter came bubbling from the heart, making the sweetest music of the earth; the voice of happy childhood! A sound that sometimes calls us from the hard dealing, the tumult, and the weariness of the world, and touches us with tender thoughts, allied to tender tears.

"What a beautiful cretur!" whispered Jem to the muffin-maker. "He's been kept out of the mud of the world, hasn't he? I say; it would be a hard job to suppose that blooming little fellow — with rags on his back, matches in his hand, and nothin' in his belly, eh? Quite as hard as to think young St. Giles was him, eh? And yet it might ha' been, mightn't it?"

"Here is the future member for Liquorish," said Mr. Folder, the child having run up to him, and jumped upon his knees. "Here, Sir, is your future representative."

"Well, if he keeps his looks," said Jem, aside to Capstick, "you won't have nothing to complain of."

"Of course, the borough will be kept warm for the young gentleman," said the muffin-man. "He may count upon my vote — yes, I may say, he may depend upon it. In the meantime, Sir, I come upon a little business in which that young gentleman is remotely concerned."

"You don't mean the shameful robbery last night?" said Mr. Folder. "A frightful case of juvenile depravity! Another proof that the world's getting worse and worse."

"No doubt of it," said Capstick; "worse and worse; it's getting so bad, it must soon be time to burn it up."

"The poor little boy who did it, Sir," said Bright Jem, very deferentially, "didn't know any better."

"Know no better! Impossible! Why, how old is he?" asked Mr. Folder.

"Jist gone seven, Sir, not more;" answered Jem.

"And here's this dear child not yet seven! And do you mean to tell me that *he* doesn't know better? Do you mean in your ignorance to insinuate that this young gentleman would do such a thing — eh?" demanded Folder of the abashed linkman.

"Bless his dear, good eyes, no" — said Jem, with some emotion — "sartinly not. But then he's been taught better. Ever since he could speak — and I dare say almost afore — every night and day he was taken upon somebody's knees, and taught to say his prayers — and what was good and what was bad — and besides that, to have all that was quiet and happy and comfortable about him — and kind words and kind looks that are almost better than bread and meat to children — for they make 'em kind and gentle too — now, the poor little boy that stole that young gentleman's hat —"

"I don't want the hat" — cried the child, for he had heard the story of the wicked boy at the play-house — "I don't want it — he may have it if he likes — I told papa so."

"Bless you, for a sweet little dear," said Jem, brushing his eyes.

"The truth is, Sir, I came here," said Capstick, "I came as a voter for the independent borough of Liquorish — to intercede with the magnanimity of the Marquess for the poor little wretch — the unhappy baby, for he's no more — now locked up for felony."

"What's the use?" asked Mr. Folder, dancing the scion of St. James upon his knee, — "what's the use of doing anything for such creatures? It's only

throwing pity away. The boy is sure to be hanged some time — depend upon it, when boys begin to steal, they can't leave it off — it's impossible — it's against nature to expect it. I always give 'em up from the first — and, depend upon it, it's the shortest way in the end: it saves a good deal of useless trouble, and I may say false humanity. As for what children are taught, and what they're not taught — why I think we make more noise about it than the argument's worth. You see, Mr. Capstick, there is an old proverb: what's bred in the bone, you know —”

“Why, Sir, saving your presence, if wickedness goes down from father to son, like colour — the only way I see to make the world better is to lay hold of all the bad people, and put 'em out of it at once; so that for the future,” concluded Jem, “we should breed nothing but goodness.”

“Pray, my good man,” asked Mr. Folder, “are you the father of the thief?”

“No, Sir, I'm not. I wish I was, with all my heart and soul,” cried Jem with animation.

“Humph, you've an odd taste for a father,” shortly observed Mr. Folder.

“What I mean, Sir, is this,” said Jem, “I've the conceit in me to think that then the boy wouldn't have been a thief at all. He'd then been better taught, and teaching's everything. I'd have sent him to school, and the devil hasn't such an enemy nowhere as a good schoolmaster.* Even now I should

* I will not say a village schoolmaster is a more important person in the state than he who is peculiarly entrusted with the education of the Prince of Wales, though I think he is a far more important personage than the highest state officer in the King's household. The material he has to deal

like to try my hand upon him, if I could have him all to myself, away from the wickedness he was hatched in."

"I dare say you mean very well, my man, no doubt of it," said Mr. Folder. "Still, I think if the boy had a little taste of the jail, —"

"A little taste," groaned Jem, "if he has ever so little, he's pisoned for life; I know that, I've seen it afore."

"And so, Sir," resumed Capstick, "I am come as a petitioner, and as voter for the borough of Liquorish, to ask his lordship's compassion for this wretched child."

"Well, I'm sure, Mr. Capstick, I'll see what's to be done, I'm sure I will. Now will you," — and Mr. Folder addressed himself smilingly to the child, — "will you ask papa, for your sake, to forgive the naughty boy that ran away with your hat?"

"Oh, yes, that I will," answered the child eagerly. "You know I don't care about the hat, I've plenty of hats. I'll run to papa now," and the child jumped from Folder's knee, and bounded from the room.

"There, my man," said Folder, with a smile of triumph to Bright Jem, "there you see the spontaneous work of a good nature."

"With good teaching," said Jem. "I know'd the little cretur that's now locked up — I know'd him when he was a babby, and if he'd only had fair play he'd ha' done the same thing."

with is man, and I think it would be rather rash to venture to limit his range or capacities. — *Lord Morpeth at the York Diocesan National Education Society.* [All honour to such nobility!]

"Let us hope he'll improve if he's forgiven," said Mr. Folder, "I will, however, go to his lordship, and know his fate." With this, Folder quitted the apartment on his benevolent mission.

"What a capital thought it was of you, Mr. Capstick, to come here; it had never entered my head," said Jem.

"Nothing like approaching the fountain source," said Capstick, serenely. "Besides, I know an election is near at hand; and as an election approaches, you can't think how it takes the stiffness out of some people. There's no accounting for it, I suppose, but so it is."

"A great many books here, Mr. Capstick," said Jem, looking reverentially at the loaded shelves; "I wonder if his lordship's read 'em all!"

"You see," answered the scoffing muffin-maker, "it's not so necessary to read a library; the great matter's to get it. With a good many folks heaps of books are nothing more than heaps of acquaintance, that they promise themselves to look in upon some day."

"Well," said Jem, his eyes glistening, "I never see books all in this fashion, without thinking that the man as has 'em is a kind of happy conjuror, that can talk when he likes with all sorts of good spirits, and never think a flea-bite of half the rubbish in the world about him."

Jem had scarcely uttered this hopeful sentence, when young St. James ran in, quickly followed by Mr. Folder. "Yes, yes," cried the child, all happiness, "papa says I must forgive him, as we ought always to forgive one another; and you're to tell

him from me that he's to be a good boy and never do so again."

"Bless your sweet heart!" cried Bright Jem, and the tears sprang to his eyes. The muffin-maker said nothing, but coughed and bowed.

"There, I think, Mr. Capstick," said F'older in a low voice, "there, I think, is a future treasure for the borough. I trust you'll not let this little story be lost on the good folks of Liquorish. Nobody will appear against the culprit, and therefore take him, and if you can, among you, make a bright man of him. Good morning, Mr. Capstick — good morning," and F'older bowed the visitors from the room. Bright Jem paused at the door, and looking back at the child, cried, "God bless you every day of your life."

Jem and the muffin-maker were about to quit the house, when they were accosted by Cesar Gum in the hall. In a confidential whisper he said — "Come and take some turkey and wine for lunch: prime Madeary — den we can go to jail for tief: dreadful ting, taking oder people's goods — come and hab some wine." And then in a still lower tone — "Give you bottle for yourself."

To this invitation, Capstick made no answer; but having looked up and down at the black, strode to the door. Bright Jem nodded, uttered a brief good morning, and followed his companion into the street, leaving Cesar Gum, who had wholly forgotten Jem's previous indignation at the peculated gunpowder, in astonishment at his rejected hospitality.

"We'll now go to Bow-street," said Capstick; and fast as they could walk, they took their way to that

abode of justice. They arrived there only a few minutes before the arraignment of young St. Giles at the bar; where he stood, in his own conceit, a miniature Turpin.

"Where are the witnesses — who makes the charge?" There were no witnesses. Again and again his worship put the question. And then he said, "No one is here who knows anything of the matter. The prisoner must be discharged. Boy, don't let me see you here again." Young St. Giles put his thumb and finger to his hair, jerked a bow, and in a few moments was free, aye, freer than the air of Hog-lane.

Jem and Capstick followed him into the street. The muffin-maker seizing him, roared — "You little rascal! What do you say for your lucky escape?"

"Say!" answered young St. Giles — "Why, I know'd it was all gammon — I know'd they could prove nothin' agin me."

CHAPTER VII.

As it is our hope, in the course of this small history, to chronicle many great achievements of our hero of the gutter, St. Giles, we shall not follow him year by year through the humble yet industrious course, in which, to his own satisfaction and strengthening conceit, he became profoundly knowing; subtly learned in every way of petty speculation; whether he plundered the orange-baskets of Covent Garden market, or whether, with finest skill, he twitched the tempting handkerchief from the pocket of the lounge. Nor was this, his lowly career, undignified by suffering. No: for ere he was twelve years old, he had tasted the hospitality of Bridewell; where, in truth, he had been inducted into the knowledge of far dearer mysteries than he had ever hoped to learn. In Bridewell, his young and ardent soul had expanded with the thoughts of future fame, won by highway pistol, or burglar's jemmy. And there, too, would he listen to fairy tales of coining: would dream of easy, lasting wealth, acquired by copper guineas. As for the lash bestowed upon him, the pain of that did but burn into his mind his high resolves. He would the more fiercely revenge the suffering upon everybody called honest. He would steal with all his heart and all his soul; he was born and bred to steal; he came into the world to do it, and he would notably fulfil his mission. Such was the strengthened belief of young St. Giles, when, at

fourteen, and for the second time, he came back to the world across the threshold of Bridewell. Such was his creed: the only creed his world had taught him. Nevertheless, our hero did not vaunt this belief, save among those of his own Newgate persuasion. On the contrary, he assumed the character of a tradesman, that under his commercial aspect he might the more securely plunder the innocents who dealt with him. True it is, he had not the security of a shop; he could not, like his patron the dealer in marine stores, despoil across a counter; but he carried a basket; and whilst, to the unsuspecting eye, he seemed only the Arcadian vendor of chickweed, groundsel, and turf for singing-birds — for the caged minstrels of the poor — he was, in every thought, a robber.

It was a fine morning early in spring, and Plumtree-street resounded with the sharp tradesman cry of young St. Giles. Pausing at a door-step, and looking up to the second-floor windows, he pitched his commercial note with a peculiar significance, as though giving notice of his whereabouts to an expected customer. "Chickweed for singing-birds," cried St. Giles, in a shrill, prolonged voice, as though he would send the glad tidings up to the garret casement, where hopped and fluttered some solitary linnet, some lonely goldfinch, that feeling the breath of spring, albeit through prison bars, sang a song of hope and cheerfulness. "Chickweed for singing-birds," cried St. Giles, with increasing volume and impatience. Then again he looked up at the window, and then muttered "The old un can't be dead, can she?" As he thus speculated the window was raised, and a woman looked down into the street. "Is it you, my poor boy?" she cried;

"stop a minute:" and instantly disappeared. "Thought the old un couldn't be dead," said St. Giles, self-communing; and then he began to hum a tune and shuffle a dancing-step upon the pavement. The door was opened by a girl, who, with no very cordial looks, muttered, — "Mrs. Simmer — well, she's a droll cretur, she is! — Mrs. Simmer says you're to come up. You can leave your basket here, can't you?"

"In course, my beauty," said St. Giles, "'cause, you see, there's only these two bunches left; and them I can carry in my hand without breaking my back." With this, St. Giles, rapidly placing his basket against the wall, gave a saucy wink to the servant, and bounded like a kid up stairs. In a moment he was with his patroness, Mrs. Simmer.

"My poor child, I thought you was lost," said the dame in the kindest voice. "What makes you so late?"

"Why, do you know, mum, I can't tell what's come to the chickweed: it doesn't grow no how, now. If I wasn't at five in the morning in Hampstead fields, a hunting in every edge, and haven't got above three penn'orth. Chickweed, mum, as Tom Blast says, seems a perishin' from the face of the earth, and only to spite poor people as lives by it. I don't know how much I couldn't ha' sold this mornin'; but I says to myself — no, there's Mrs. Simmer's blessed little linnet, and her darlin' gooldfinch as draws his own water, — they sha'n't go without, whosomever does."

"Poor dear child! good little boy," said Mrs. Simmer, looking with softened looks upon the wily trader.

"And to hear how all the birds did seem to call to me from their cages — I'm blessed if they didn't

mum, as I come along — but no, says I to 'em, it's no use, my little cockies, no use to be gammonin' me — this here chickweed's for Mrs. Simmer's Bob and Tit, and for nobody else whatsoever." And after this fashion was the simplicity of two-score and ten talked to and duped by precocious fourteen.

But dear Mrs. Simmer seemed to be one of those good old people who strangely enough carry their hearts in their heads. She had not been above a fortnight in London at the time of this interview with St. Giles, whom she had met in the street, and whose pathetic tale of destitution, delivered with the cunning of an actor, had carried away her sympathies. St. Giles, however, had another claim upon her. He was, she said, such a pretty boy. Dear soul! she could no more read a human face than she could read Sanscrit. She only saw the bright, glittering eyes of St. Giles, and not the fox that looked from them; she praised his eyes and face, as she might have praised a handsome hieroglyph, wholly unconscious of its subtle meaning. A great master has said, "there is something in true beauty that vulgar souls cannot admire." And sure we are, there is something in the truest rascality, that simple benevolent souls cannot detect. They have no eye for the worst counterfeit countenance; have no ear for a false voice, let it ring ever so brassily. Now, dear Mrs. Simmer was one of these: hence was she at fifty but a babe, an innocent, in the hands of young St. Giles.

"Now, my poor child" — she said, "take some tea. I've kept it for you, with some toast;" and Mrs. Simmer took a smoking jug and a plate piled with toast from either hob, and placed them on the

table, before her guest. "Take as much as you can, my child, and then you shall tell me all your story as you promised. Poor lamb! Bless you, eat — it does my heart good to see you;" and Mrs. Simmer, folding her hands, looked with almost maternal tenderness upon St. Giles, who acknowledging the welcome with a knowing nod, proceeded vigorously with his meal. Mrs. Simmer thought she never saw so handsome a creature; what St. Giles thought of Mrs. Simmer, we will not say. "And so you've no father nor mother, my dear boy?" after some time asked Mrs. Simmer.

"Not one on 'em," answered St. Giles, rapidly moving his buttered chin. "Not one on 'em."

"The Lord help you!" cried Mrs. Simmer: "and no uncle, no aunt, no" —

"No nothin', mum," said St. Giles; and he gulped his tea. "All on 'em died, mum, when I was a babby."

"Poor dear child! Bless my heart! And how have you been brought up?"

"Brought up, mum" — and St. Giles grinned and scratched his head — "you said brought up, mum? Don't know, mum."

"And where do you live, now, my poor boy?" and Mrs. Simmer melted with every question.

"Don't live nowhere, reg'lar, mum. Poor boys, like me, why we live — as Tom Blast says — like the rats, where we can. Then o' nights, mum, I sometimes sleeps in the market among the baskets. Sometimes, though, don't they come with a stick, and cut us out! I b'lieve you!" and St. Giles seemed to speak with a lively recollection of such incidents.

"Cuts the werry breath out o' you," he then significantly added.

"Cruel creatures! Gracious little lamb! And I'm afraid you meet with bad boys there, eh? Wicked boys, that may some day tempt you to do something wrong? Eh?" asked simple Mrs. Simmer.

"Believe you," said St. Giles, with well-acted gravity. "Lots on 'em wanted me to go picking pockets."

"Heaven forbid!" cried Mrs. Simmer, and the tears came to her eyes.

"That's what I said, mum; no, says I, no, I shall stick to chickweed if I starves for it—I'm not a-going to be hanged to please nobody: no, mum."

"That such a precious flower should be thrown away!" cried Mrs. Simmer to herself; and then to St. Giles: "You're a good boy; I'm sure you're a good boy. And tell me; I hope you go to church?"

"Oh, I should like it so!" cried St. Giles: "but you see, mum, it's not to be done."

"How so, my boy?" asked Mrs. Simmer.

"Look here, mum," and St. Giles, with the coolness of a philosopher, drew his feet up almost level with the table, and, with his forefinger, pointed to his ten muddy toes, that showed themselves through the parted shoe-leather. "Parson wouldn't have 'em, by no means. I did once try to go to church; I did begin to feel so wicked. Well, mum, if the beadle didn't come up, mum, and nearly cut me in two, mum."

"How wicked — how barbarous!" said the ingenuous Mrs. Simmer.

"And only for my bad shoes, and the oles in my coat; but that's how they serves poor boys, mum. I

don't think it's kind, mum; do you, mum?" And St. Giles tried to look at once injured and innocent.

Mrs. Simmer wiped her eyes, making an effort to be calm. She then said, "I've been thinking, if I could get you a place in a gentleman's house."

"Wouldn't that be prime?" cried St. Giles: and as he spoke, there rang through the house a loud and hurried knock at the street-door. Mrs. Simmer, without a word, jumped to her feet, and ran to the window.

"Well, I declare! if it isn't that blessed child! if it isn't his lordship!" she cried.

Young St. Giles, at the word lordship, slid from his chair, and looked slyly about him. Was it possible that a lord could be coming into that room? Could he imagine such a thing as to see a real lord in such a place? Ere St. Giles had done wondering, the room-door was flung open, and in ran young St. James. St. Giles seemed to shrink into himself at the splendid appearance of the new-comer. He wore a bright scarlet coat, thickly ornamented with gold buttons: and a black beaver hat with a large, heavy feather of the same colour, brought out in strong contrast his flushed and happy face. For the moment, young St. Giles felt himself overpowered, abashed by the magnificent outside of the little stranger. He sidled into a corner of the room, and looked at that scarlet coat as though it had been something dropt from the heavens. "Well, nurse," cried St. James, with a loud, ringing laugh, "I told you I'd come and see you, and here I am. I went out riding with Mr. Folder. Well, he stopt to talk to somebody, and so I just gave him the slip, put Jessy into such a gallop, and was here in a minute. I say, can't that boy,"

and St. James pointed his riding-whip towards St. Giles — “can’t that boy hold Jessy, instead of the girl?”

“To be sure, my lord — to be sure,” cried Mrs. Simmer.

“Sartinly, my lord — directly, my lord — I knows how to hold osses, my lord,” said St. Giles, in a flutter.

“Just walk her up and down a little, will you, for she’s hot,” said St. James, with an early knowledge of horse-flesh.

“Yes, my lord — to be sure, my lord — walk her up and down, my lord:” and St. Giles flew down the stairs, and relieved the girl of her charge. Young St. James was then left to have his gossip with Mrs. Simmer; from which gossip a stranger might have learned that the good woman had, for years, been in the service of the family of St. James; that she had been the favourite nurse of his young lordship; and that for the first time in her life she had come to London from the country, where, made comfortable by a pension granted to her by the marchioness, after a short sojourn in the metropolis, it was her purpose to return. She had been to the house in the square, where young St. James had made his chivalrous promise to visit her; yes, at all hazards, to seek Plumtree-street, out of pure love, and a little frolic, to his old nurse. “Oh, I shall be at home now before Mr. Folder,” said young St. James, in answer to the fears of Mrs. Simmer, alarmed at the escape of the young gentleman from his tutor. However, we must leave them and descend to the pavement to St. Giles.

With an air of becoming gravity, the boy led the

pony up and down before the door, his eyes riveted upon the beast; certainly a creature of extreme beauty. She was jet black, of exquisite delicacy of outline; and her arched neck, quivering nostril, and fiery eye, told something for the spirit and horsemanship of the boy who rode her. Up and down St. Giles walked; and now looking at the animal, now thinking of the boy lord, it appeared to him that all the treasures of the world were concentrated in that pony; that St. James was a sort of earthly angel; a being of altogether another kind to the boys St. Giles had ordinarily met with. There was something so magnificent about the pony and its rider, that only to have had his lordship to speak to him, that only to hold the bridle of his steed, seemed in the confused brain of St. Giles to redeem him from somewhat of his misery and lowliness. He could not but think the better of himself for all time to come. He had spoken to a lord — had held his horse! Could any of his gutter companions boast such greatness? These thoughts were busying the mind of St. Giles, when he heard himself addressed by a familiar voice. "What! my flower?" was the greeting; and St. Giles, turning, beheld his friend and tutor, Tom Blast. St. Giles, in his last retirement to Bridewell, had had the advantage of Tom's tuition; and, to speak truly, the teacher and pupil were worthy of each other. Tom was a scoundrel of most extensive experience; and had the happy art of so simplifying his knowledge, that he made it available to the meanest understanding. St. Giles, however, had no need of any such condescension: he could jump at a meaning, good or bad, half-way. Hence, the teacher and the taught respected each

other for their mutual excellence. In fact, Tom Blast looked upon Young St. Giles, as his Newgate son; and St. Giles — in default of another — considered Tom as the best of fathers.

"What have you got here?" asked Tom, his eye sparkling all over the pony.

"Got a oss to hold," said St. Giles, with an inquiring look at Tom. Then he added, sinking his voice — "it belongs to a lord: sich a little chap, and yet a lord."

"Well, she's a beauty," said Blast: "make her walk a little faster."

"She *is* a beauty," cried St. Giles, boldly venturing an opinion, and quickening the animal's pace.

"What a sweet trot!" said Blast, "so light and so free! Why she wouldn't break a egg-shell, would she?"

"I should think not," answered St. Giles, a little flattered that his opinion was solicited.

"Come up!" cried Blast, urging the beast into a quicker pace. "Come along, sweet-lips!"

"Stop, Tom; stop!" said the prudent St. Giles, when he had arrived in Bedford-square. "Blest if we don't turn back, if they won't think we're a going to steal her; and that wouldn't do, no how, would it, Tom?" asked the boy, and his eye encountered Tom's thoughtful look.

"Why, — no," answered Tom with some deliberation. "No; it wouldn't — turn her round agin; and walk her gently, Giles; gently, pretty cretur." And as St. Giles complied, Tom turned too, walking with meditative eye that now glanced at the boy and now at the pony. Ambitious thoughts busied the brain of

the poor, timid thief, Tom Blast; and he pondered on the means whereby he could reap the profits of a stolen horse, still assuring to himself exemption from the tragic penalty. For many years Tom had from time to time eaten stolen bread; nevertheless, he had lived, as it were, upon the crumbs, the broken morsels of crime. He had never had the courage to dare Tyburn that he might dine, but he satisfied himself with the pickings of petty larceny. No: he never promised to earn for himself either biography or portrait in the Newgate Calendar. Hence, he was a little perplexed at the temptation that would intrude itself upon him as he glanced at Lord St. James's satin-coated pony. Fortune seemed willing to make him a handsome present of horse-flesh, if he had only the valour to accept it. No; he would not be tempted: he had resolved to die a natural death, and therefore he resolutely dismissed the demon that would destroy him. Nevertheless, he thought it possible that policy might achieve what courage failed to attempt. He might accomplish all by a stroke of wit, profiting in security by the danger of another. St. Giles might be made the robber, and Tom Blast, in happiest safety, pocket the proceeds. Thus ruminating, Tom again reached Mrs. Simmer's door.

"Not wanted yet," said St. Giles, looking from the door to the window. "We'll give her another trot, eh?" And at the word the pony was turned towards Bedford-square.

"Gently," said Blast, "gently. Why don't you have a ride upon her? The young lord wouldn't know nothing of it. And what if he did? He couldn't take the ride out of you again. Only not so big, else

she's the very pictur — yes the very moral of Dick Turpin's Bess," said Blast, looking critically, admiringly, at Jessy. "Get up, and don't be a young fool," he added; and then St. Giles — he hardly knew how it was accomplished — found himself in the saddle. "There, that's something like life, isn't it?" said the tempter suddenly, speaking from the whole breadth of the pavement, and every other minute looking cautiously behind him the while he mended his pace, and St. Giles jerked the pony into a trot. "That's something like living for, eh? and I should like to know why you shouldn't have it just as soon as any little lord whatsoever?"

"Ha! wouldn't that be prime, Tom?" cried St. Giles, his eyes sparkling, and face glowing. "Wouldn't it be prime?"

"It's nothing more than what you ought to have; why you ride as well as if you was born upon her back — give her her head a little more — now down this way," sharply added Blast; and then rapidly turning to the right, he ran on, St. Giles trotting hard after him. Arrived at the east side of Russel-square, Tom suddenly halted. "Now, St. Giles," said he, "are you man enough to make your fortin?"

"I should think so," said Giles, in high spirits with his feat of horsemanship.

"Now listen to a friend, Giles — a friend as never yet deceived you," said Blast with sudden gravity. "Throw away this bit of luck, and you may never get another. Take the pony and sell it." St. Giles stared. "Why not, you fool! you may as well" — cried Blast — "you've stole it you know."

"Stole it!" cried St. Giles.

"It's all the same; there's nobody as would believe otherwise — so I'll stand your friend, and get you the money for the bargain. Ha! I see — you hav'n't no pluck in you — not a bit," said the taunting friend.

"Ain't I, though? jist you see," cried young St. Giles, determined to do anything.

"Well, then, as you've got yourself into a bit of trouble, I'll stand by you. Now, you listen; just dash as hard as you can through the fields, and then turn to the right — and so round and round, until — you know the way — until you drop down upon Smithfield. Then make for Long Lane; and then just afore you get to the Blue Posts — get off and lead the pony up and down as if you was holding her for somebody — and then in a crack I'm with you. Now, look sly, and your fortin's made. Young Turpin for ever! Off with you!" And so saying, the Tyburn monitor slapt the pony smartly with his broad hand, and the mettlesome creature bounded forth, young St. Giles with difficulty keeping the saddle. Away went the pony up the Long Fields and away towards Islington! The words "young Turpin" still rang in the ears of St. Giles, as he cantered along. He felt that he had already done something worthy the exalted name bestowed upon him; and as his blood mounted with the exercise, he imagined future triumphs that would make him glorious. The robbery of the horse was, for the time, altogether forgotten in the increased importance that had fallen upon him. He dreamt not of the punishment attending the theft; he only thought of the hateful of guineas that the stolen property would produce him. And then, as he rode, how petty and

contemptible did his former pickings and stealings appear to him; he almost felt ashamed of himself, comparing his past petty larcenies with this his crowning achievement. From the moment he had taken leave of boyhood. He had suddenly become a man, by the grace of daring felony. Then, he thought, how should he ever be able to spend the money? Would he not have a scarlet coat with gold lace to it, — ay, much finer than the little lord's? And would he not go to the play every night, and have his hot supper afterwards? And would he not flourish money in a hundred ways that should make all his old companions — the little dirty, paltry thieves of Hog Lane — look up to him with devotion and astonishment?

Still young St. Giles ambled along, and still the world seemed changed to him. All things about him bore a brighter hue; all things sounded with a sweeter music; his brain seemed on wings, and his lightened heart danced in his bosom. And — poor wretch — this ecstasy of ignorance arose from evil, from a crime whose fatal effects, certain as death, would follow him. Still the very houses, to his fancy, took a new and pleasant aspect; wherever he looked he saw a new face of happiness — whatever he heard came toned with a new note of harmony. He saw not the blackened stones of Newgate — heard not the freezing accents of the death-dooming judge. Miserable, foolish wretch!

Yet how often do men — in the ripeness of worldly wisdom — imitate the folly, share the ignorance of young St. Giles! Elated by the commission of some profitable wrong, seeming secret, too, as profitable —

how often to them does Fortune seem to put on a new and shining face, when at the very time she grasps the lash, or drugs the bitter bowl that shall revenge the wickedness. For a brief time does successful evil put a new tint of outside beauty upon all the world; and happy knavery rejoices in the cunning that makes the world to him so beautiful. What a plodding, leaden-eyed fool is mere honesty; what an oaf, an ass, compared to him who squares his code of morals by his seeming interest! And then full surely time advances, and the world, that looked so fresh and smiling, is hollow-checked and ghastly — its beauty wiped away, even as a harlot's paint. Successful knavery, dizzied with its luck, sees suddenly delicious scenes — a paradise of worldly joy and life-long rest — then, waking to the truth, beholds around it burning, barren sand. If the mature pilgrims of the world are sometimes so deceived, why not the boy St. Giles?

Still the young, yes, and happy, felon trotted on; until he entered Smithfield. He then walked the pony slowly up Long Lane, and soon as he espied the Blue Posts, faithful to his orders, he dismounted, looking anxiously around him for his friend and instructor, Tom Blast. A quarter of an hour passed, and still he came not. And then, and for the first time, he looked at the stolen goods with lowering eyes, and his heart felt leaden. What was he to do with the pony without Tom? Nobody would buy it of him. And then a deeper and a deeper shadow fell upon all things; and, biting his lips, young St. Giles, with eyes — quick as rats' — looked about and about him. What an ugly brute the pony seemed to him!

Yes; he knew what he would do: he would jump upon the pony, gallop back to Plumtree-street, and swear he had only been for a ride. Anything to be well clear of the pony. With this thought St. Giles had his foot in the stirrup, when he was tapped upon the shoulder by a man plainly and comfortably dressed in a dark-grey suit, wearing a light flaxen wig in tight curls, surmounted by a large beaver hat, scrupulously sleek. He had a broad, fat face, with a continual smile, laid like lacker upon it. And, when he spoke, he spoke very gently and very softly, as with lips of butter.

"My dear little boy," said the stranger, patting St. Giles affectionately on the back, "where have you been so long?"

St. Giles looked — he could not help it — very suspiciously at the stranger; then scratching his head, he observed, "Don't know you, Sir."

"I dare say not; how should you, my dear? But you will know me, and for a friend. I've waited for you these ten minutes."

St. Giles said nothing: nevertheless his thoughts were never more active. He by no means liked the appearance of his new friend; he felt afraid of him. He would fling himself into the saddle, and gallop off. As he determined upon this, the stranger, in the gentlest manner, twitched the bridle from his hand, and gently said, "My little dear, it's all right."

"All right!" cried St. Giles; and somehow he felt that his stolen pony was about to be stolen from him — "what's all right?"

"You came from Plumtree-street." St. Giles winced. "Now you know you did; don't tell a lie, my little

dear; for don't you know what comes of little boys who tell lies? I have seen your friend, and paid him; it's all right; but as you're such a nice little boy, here's a guinea for yourself." St. Giles's heart rose somewhat at the guinea. "You're to go into the house, and wait for Mr. Blast." St. Giles's eyes twinkled at the name: of course, as the stranger averred, it must be all right. "Stop, don't change the guinea; here's a shilling too, my little dear. Now, go in — I don't want to be thanked — only let me see you go in, that you mayn't come to any harm in the street." St. Giles, taking a last look at the pony, entered the Blue Posts. The stranger and the pony went — who shall say whither?

St. Giles meekly seated himself in a corner of the hostelry, ordering for his refection two pennyworth of ale, and bread and cheese. And when he had somewhat solaced his inward boy, he began to wonder when Tom Blast would come. Hour after hour passed, and still St. Giles remained alone. Again and again he looked at the clock — again and again at the guinea. Never before had he possessed such wealth: and the contemplation of his riches in a great measure abated his anxiety for the arrival of Tom; even though he thought of him as the bearer of other guineas, the purchase-money of the pony. Still, there was the charm, the fascination of ready gold to comfort St. Giles; and the glitter of the money held him like the eye of a snake. His only perplexity was how he could best spend the guinea. He was deep in these thoughts when, the room having filled, his attention was awakened by a man who, talking very loudly — and with his clenched fist beating the table the while — about what

and St. Giles, with a heavy heart, though lightened somewhat by his guinea, turned into the street. He could not go home — no; at least, for a time, Hog Lane must be to him a forbidden Paradise. No matter. Had he not a guinea — a whole guinea — to himself? The thought, even in the midnight street, fell like a sunbeam upon him; he sprang from the pavement with a shout, reckless with his wealth. He would make a night of it — yes, he would have all things glorious! And with this hilarious wilfulness, he took to his heels, and was speedily housed for the night within the very shadow of the walls of Newgate.

CHAPTER VIII.

FOR more than a week did St. Giles live upon his guinea. True it is, that for the first day or two he dined and supped in the Apollo of an eastern cook-shop; besides taking his luncheon of fried fish in the Minories, for the which delicacy, the Hebrews thereabout dwelling enjoy a just renown. But these days of Carnival past, St. Giles economised, with a fine knowledge of the resources of the metropolis. Twopence awarded to him the sweets of sleep beneath a roof; and a shilling saw him safely through the day. However, let not the reader imagine that St. Giles — like many a great genius — was made dull and inactive by the golden reward of his ability; a circumstance to be so often deplored in the case of great authors, great painters, and especially of great philosophers; wherefore, it is questionable, if the world would not really gain more by them if it never rewarded them at all. St. Giles was not one of these. No: he still kept his eyes wide open at the doings of life; still hived, in that odd, world-twisted little brain of his, all sorts of knowledge for the future day. He especially employed part of his time, hanging about the haunts of Tom Blast; but, strange to say, that interesting person never showed himself in any of his wonted places of ease and recreation. Again and again did St. Giles travel Long-Lane — again slink and spy into every haunt, in the fond and foolish hope of once

more meeting with the soft-spoken man who, at the ruinous price of one guinea one shilling, had purchased a pony of incomparable Arab blood. St. Giles, with all his friendship, all his gratitude for Tom, could not but feel that he had been tricked, bamboozled by his tutor; and the nearer and nearer he approached to his last shilling, the more intense was his indignation — the more insatiable his appetite of revenge.

It was the ninth day of St. Giles's absence from his maternal home, and the pilgrim of London stood before a house of humble entertainment in Cow Cross. The time was noon; and St. Giles, feeling the last threepence in his pocket — turning them over, one by one — was endeavouring to arbitrate between pudding and bed. If he bought a cut of pudding — and through the very window pane he seemed to nose its odour — he had not wherewithal to buy a lodging. What of that? London had many doorways — hospitable stone-steps — for nothing; and pudding must be paid for. Still he hesitated; when the cook-shop man removed the pudding from the window. This removal immediately decided St. Giles. He rushed into the shop, and laid down his last worldly stake upon the counter. "Threepenn'orth o' puddin', and a good threepenn'orth," said St. Giles. With a look of half-reproof and half-contempt the tradesman silently executed the order; and in a few moments, St. Giles stood upon the king's highway, devouring with great relish his last threepence. Whilst thus genially employed, he heard a far-off voice roar through the muggy air: his heart beat, and he ate almost to choking, as he listened to these familiar words: — "*A most True and Particular Account of the Horrible Circumstance of a Bear that has been Fed*

upon Five Young Children in a Cellar in Westminster!" It was the voice of Blast; and St. Giles swallowed his pudding, hurriedly used the back of his hand for a napkin, and following the sound of the crier, was in a trice in Peter-street, and one of the mob that circled the marvel-monger of Hog-Lane. Nevertheless, though Tom roared with an energy that very strongly declared his own faith in the horror that he sought to vend for only one halfpenny, his auditors lacked credulity or coppers for the well-worn enormity. Nobody purchased. Not even a timorous, sympathising servant-maid advanced through the crowd to make the mystery her own. Tom felt it. His standing in the world as a tradesman was fast crumbling from beneath his feet. St. Giles was hurrying up to his old and early friend, when, at a short distance, he beheld his former patron, Capstick, the muffin-maker, and Bright Jem. They looked, as he thought, somewhat curiously at his friend Tom, and then seemed to take counsel of one another. Under these circumstances, St. Giles thought that to accost Tom, would be to call unnecessary attention to himself. He, therefore, remained, shrunk down among the mob that every moment became less and less. What, too, made it most discouraging to Mr. Blast were the scoffs and loud laughter with which certain new-comers would listen to the description of the horror sought to be circulated, and then hurry off. "That cock won't fight now!" cried one. "A little late in the day for that. Get something new," cried another. "Gammon!" shouted a third.

Nevertheless, be of good heart, Tom Blast; take consolation from this. You suffer in great society;

you sink in most worshipful companionship. Very reverend, grave, authoritative persons — men of the bench, even of the pulpit — who, for centuries, sold to their exceeding profit, “Most True and Particular Accounts” of a horrid bear of some sort — whether of royal or feudal privilege — of witchcraft — of popery — of sham rebellion — nay, fifty bears and bugbears, all of horrid, ghastly nature, — they, too, in their turns, have outlived the profitable lie. And even in these latter days, when some Tom Blast in higher places, — nay, in the highest — sounds his tin horn of bigotry, and would trade upon some bear apocryphal, he is assured in the like sense, although in gentler phrase, that such cock will by no means fight — that the day has passed for so foolish, vain a story — that, finally, his bear is no bear at all, but briefly, yet intensely, gammon. Has not history her catch-pennies, even as the archives of Seven Dials?

Mr. Blast was somewhat of a philosopher. He could have borne the laughter and scoffing of the crowd, if any of them had bought his ware; but his philosophy was not of that transcendental kind to endure outrage, unmitigated by any sort of coin, even the smallest, current in the realm. He therefore, with a *sotto voce* expression of the deepest contempt for his hearers, broke from the crowd, passing on, and then — his legs evidently walking in a passion — turning, he strode still onwards until he entered Cow Lane. Here, St. Giles, hanging at his skirts, came up with him.

“Well, if it isn’t a sight for bad eyes to see you!” said the unabashed Tom. “But don’t let’s talk in

the street." And Tom made for an opposite public-house, one of his customary places of call, unknown to St. Giles. Stalking through the passage, followed by his young friend, he made his way into a small, dark, low room. "I thought there'd be nobody here," said Tom; and then in a tone of great tenderness and anxiety, looking straight in the eyes of St. Giles, he asked, "Well, and where have you been? 'They're mad about you in the Lane. Where have you been?"

"Why, I've been looking for you," said St. Giles, moodily nodding his head. "You must have know'd that."

"And that's, I suppose, why we didn't happen to meet," replied Tom; possibly recollecting that his chief care had been to keep out of the boy's way. "Why, what's the matter? you look plaguy sarcy! What are you looking so black at, you young devil?" cried Tom, with sudden ferocity; but St. Giles felt his injuries, and was not to be browbeaten.

"Why, I'm a looking at you, — and not much to look at neither," shouted St. Giles, with answering vigour. "You're not a goin' to frighten me, I can tell you. Why didn't you come as you promised you would? You're a good un, you are!"

"Now, what does ail the boy?" said Tom, coaxingly; though evidently ill at ease: for his fingers worked; and he bit his lip as he gazed on the boy, who, with sullen, defying air, returned his stare.

"Why, this ails me. Didn't you tell me to take that pony to Long Lane — and then didn't you tell me to wait for you?"

"I know it, Giles; I know it; but you see, as I

went along, I thought agin over the matter. I thought, you see, it might lead you into trouble, if I come; so I thought I'd stay away, and you'd bring the pony home agin, and then, mayhap, after a little breeze, there'd be an end of the matter. That's it, Giles," said cautious Mr. Blast.

"Then, why did you send the man as give me a guinea, and took the pony away? Him as said, too, that he'd made it all right with you, and —"

Here St. Giles was interrupted in his volubility by Mr. Blast; who performed — and an admirable performance it was — a look of immense astonishment, at the same time whistling very vehemently. At length, mastering his wonder, he cried — "Why, Giles! you've never sold the pony?"

"No. I never sold it — but you did; the gemman' told me so. You sold it; and after that —"

Mr. Blast could scarcely contain himself, so big, so swelling was his compassion for the injured boy. "Oh, Giles," he cried — "poor little fellow! You're done, Giles; you're done."

"And who's done me? Why, you have," screamed the youngster in a paroxysm of passion. All childhood vanished from his face; so suddenly was it convulsed with rage. He stood, for a moment, breathless with anger; and forgetful in his fury of the bulk and strength of his former teacher, he clenched his little fist, and grinding his teeth, advanced towards Blast, who, for a moment, recoiled from the small assailant. Then, recovering himself, he laid his hands upon his knees, and with an effort to be calm, contemptuous, said; "And this, you little varmint, is your thanks to me; to me, you scorpion, as has been better than a father

to you! To me, who's taught you ballad-chanting, and everything as is decent you know; to me, as has laid awake in my bed thinkin' what I could do for you in the mornin'; to me, who's always looked on you as a rasher of my own flesh! And you'll shake them little mawleys at me!" The picture of ingratitude was almost too much for Mr. Blast. He was nearly melted in his own tenderness.

"None o' that — that won't do for me, no how," cried St. Giles. "You made me steal the pony — you sold it, and now —"

The charge was too much for the indignant virtue of Mr. Blast. With an exclamation of disgust, he aimed a blow at his accuser, that but for his agility, would have laid him senseless on the floor. Bobbing his head and doubling himself up with wonderful elasticity, St. Giles escaped the meditated punishment, and the next moment saw him fastened on Tom; clasping him round the waist, and kicking with all his might and malice at his benefactor's shins. Tom, mad with pain and vexation, sought to fling the urchin off; but he held to his prey like a stoat. For some moments the boy heroically suffered the worst punishment that his master in iniquity could inflict, returning it with unequal powers. At length, Blast unclasping the urchin's hold, seized him in his arms, and threw him violently off. The boy fell, stunned, against the wainscot. The infuriate savage, his passion raging, was about to deal a blow — it would have been the last — upon the prostrate boy, when Capstick, Bright Jem, and a couple of officers burst into the room. Blast immediately divined their business, and with masterly coolness observed, pointing to St. Giles lying

in the corner a senseless heap — "There's your young oss-stealer for you; and a nice job I've had to nibble him. A varmint of a pole-cat as he is!"

"The young un and the old un, too," said one of the officers. "Why this is better luck than we bargained for."

Jem lifted the boy between his knees; he was still pale and senseless. "Mr. Capstick," said Jem, "for God's sake, some water!" Then turning an indignant look upon Blast, he added, "Why, what a paving-stone you must have for a heart, to use a poor child like this."

"A child!" cried Blast, "a young devil!"

"And if he is," said Jem, "who's made him one? Murder! why it's the worst of murders; to take and kill all the good in a child's soul, and then to fling him into the world to do his worst, and answer for't."

"There, there, never mind, Jem," cried Capstick, who was turning himself round, and shuffling about, visibly affected by the miserable condition of the child, yet struggling to maintain his outward misanthropy. "All wretches; all alike, worthless animals!" And then he roared at the waiter as he entered — "Why don't you bring some water — some brandy — anything, everything for this poor creature — this miserable — helpless — forlorn — unhappy little boy?" Again Capstick turned his face in a corner, and violently blew his nose, and coughed, and vowed he never had such a cold in all his life.

"There, there," said one of the officers, as Jem bathed the boy's face, "he'll come round again, never fear."

Jem groaned, and shook his head. "Yes, he will come round," he said. "If it wasn't that blood would be on somebody's head, it would be a good thing, if he never did. Lord! Lord!" cried Jem, "to think that this is the babby's face I once knew!"

"Pooh — pooh! — nonsense," said Capstick; "we've nothing to do with that; nothing at all. The ends of justice — the ends of justice, Mr. Aniseed," — and again the muffin-maker coughed; he had such a cold.

However, whilst Jem — with his heart running at his eyes — is solacing young St. Giles, we will, as briefly as we may, inform the reader of the cause that has brought the muffin-maker and the linkman to Smithfield.

Ever since the conclusion of our sixth chapter — which the urbanity of the reader will consider to be no less than six years ago — fortune smiled upon Capstick. True it is, she often smiles upon the strangest lumps of men — is oft a very Titania enamoured with an ass's head — nevertheless, she showed good judgment in the favours she bestowed upon the muffin-maker. So fortune made interest with her good sister fame to play a flourish on her trumpet in praise of Capstick's muffins; that in time rejoiced many hearths without the circle of St. Giles's. In a word, Capstick soon built an enduring reputation upon muffins; and therefore had a better chance of his name going buttered down to posterity than has the name of every monarch duly buttered in birth-day ode. Well, the calls upon Capstick's oven were so increasing, that his wife suggested he should forthwith start a horse and very genteel cart. She, good woman! had no eye to a Sunday drive — the vanity never entered her head; all she

thought of was business: which she had no wish whatever to adulterate with even a drop of pleasure. Mr. Capstick was somewhat twitted with himself that such proposal emanated from his wife: it was so good, so reasonable, it ought to have been his own. However, he would say, the woman had caught something like judgment by living with him. At once, then, Mr. Capstick consented to the vehicle; and that purchased a bargain, he took his way — in pestilent hour for him — to Smithfield, to buy a horse. Now, Mr. Capstick knew no more of the points of a horse than of a unicorn. As, however, he had little faith in human nature, and none whatever when mixed up with horse-flesh, he said to himself that he might as well be cheated at first hand as at second; therefore, went he alone to buy a steed. Arrived in the market, full soon was he singled out by a benevolent, yet withal discerning dealer, who could see in a twinkling the very sort of thing that would suit him. "A nice little cretur that would eat nothing, and go fifty miles a day upon it." In brief, the worthy man sold to the muffin-maker, sold to him for an old song — to be sure, he could afford to let it go thus cheap — the black pony which only two days before had been the valued possession of Lord St. James. For four-and-twenty hours only did the muffin-man rejoice in his purchase; for on his very first attempt to degrade the high-blooded animal to a cart — it was quite as fit to draw St. Paul's — the creature, although its flowing tail and mane had been ruthlessly docked and cropped — was identified by Cesar Gum, on his way with a sisterly message to Short's Gardens. Never before had Mr. Capstick known the full value of a good character.

His story of the transaction was received as truth; and though he lost the ten pounds — the value of the old song — he had given for the animal, he maintained his untarnished reputation. Of course, St. Giles was soon known as the horse-stealer. It also came out, that Mr. Thomas Blast had been seen in very earnest conversation with the boy, as he led the pony. Every search was made for Tom; and as, with a modesty not usual to him, he seemed wholly to have withdrawn himself from his native parish, curiosity to learn his whereabouts was the further quickened. Mr. Capstick felt his judgment, his pocket, too, somewhat involved in the transaction. He felt that he stood fair and upright in the eye of the world, nevertheless it would be to him a peculiar satisfaction could he detect Mr. Thomas Blast, or the benevolent, simple-spoken tradesman who — for the price of an old song — had sold the pony. With this wish thumping at his heart, Capstick every day visited Smithfield and its neighbourhood; taking with him Bright Jem, whom he had accustomed himself to think an honest, worthy fellow, and his particular friend; that is, so far as the misanthropy of the muffin-maker would acknowledge the possible existence of such a treasure. It was strange, however, that Capstick, in his thoughts of revenge, had no thought of young St. Giles. No: all the vehemence of his wrath was roused against the boy's tutor.

We have now, we trust, sufficiently explained the course of accidents that brought the muffin-maker and Jem to Porter-street, and so made them hearers of the unprofitable oratory of Tom Blast. Fearful that they might be recognised by him, they employed a third

party to watch him to his haunt, whilst they secured the attendance of officers. Hence, they saw not St. Giles, who, as we have before observed, kept himself close among the mob. They were the more astonished to find the ill-used boy in the same room with his schoolmaster.

"There, now — he's all right," cried one of the officers, as St. Giles — restored by the efforts of Bright Jem — looked about him. However, no sooner was he conscious of the presence of Capstick and his fast friend Jem, than his face glowed like a coal. He hung down his head, and burst into tears: there was no sham whimpering — no taunted effort of sorrow — but the boy's heart seemed touched, melted, and he wept and writhed convulsively. A recollection of the goodness — the disregarded kindness of the men before him — thrilled through his soul, and though he knew it not, he felt the yearnings of a better nature. There was anguish — penitence — in the sobs that seemed to tear his vitals.

"Thank God for that!" cried Jem; and the poor fellow wept, too. "I like to hear that, — eh, Mr. Capstick?"

Mr. Capstick felt an odd queasiness in his throat, and could say nothing. He therefore again threw himself upon his pocket-handkerchief. Then, conscious that he had a great duty to perform for the ends of justice — a fact that, when otherwise puzzled, he had more than once insisted upon — he turned to the officers, and pointing his thumb towards Blast, observed with peculiar loftiness, "You will be good enough to handcuff that man."

"Handcuff me!" cried Mr. Blast. "They'll do it at their peril."

"Ha! my good man — I beg your pardon — you desperate scoundrel!" said Capstick with withering urbanity, "they're accustomed to do a great deal at their peril; thanks to such rascals as you. Handcuff him!"

"They darn't do it — they darn't do it," shouted the struggling Blast; and in a moment afterwards his wrists were locked in iron. "I'll make you pay for this — never mind; it's no matter to me — but I'll make you pay for this," he said; and then, like a Tyburn philosopher, Tom became suddenly reconciled to his manacles.

We will not dwell upon the details of the examination of the prisoners. It will be sufficient for the reader to know that, after certain preliminaries, a sitting alderman committed St. Giles and his tutor for horse-stealing. Both scholar and master awaited their trial in Newgate.

It was not until after the culprit's first examination, that Capstick felt the full annoyance of his position. When Jem would shake his head, and look dumpish on the matter, Capstick would talk loud, and beg him to think of the ends of justice; but when the boy was committed on the capital charge, the muffin-maker's public spirit wholly forsook him. Evidence had brought the accusation quite home to the boy; however legal proof might fail to criminate his tempter. "They'll never — never think of much hurting the boy — a child, you know — a mere child?" said Capstick to Jem, as they left Guildhall together.

"Humph! I don't know what you call hurting, Mr. Capstick," said Jem, moodily. "But I shouldn't think hanging nothin'."

Capstick turned pale as flour, and he could scarcely articulate the words — "Impossible — ridiculous — they couldn't do it."

"Ha!" cried Jem, "when hanging's the thing, you don't know what they can do. Well, I'd rather ha' been in bed, with a broken limb, than had a finger in this matter. I shall have that poor child always about me: I know I shall. When he's killed and gone, I shall never take my pipe without seeing his face in the fire. And then my poor old woman! She that still's so fond of him — poor orphan thing! for his mother's worse than lost to him — she'll lead me a nice life — that is, though she won't say anything outright, she'll always be a crying about him. We've done a nice thing, Mr. Capstick, to make our lives pleasant as long as they last!"

"Pooh, pooh — folly, Jem; all folly. I suppose property must be protected. I suppose you won't deny that, eh?" asked Capstick.

"I deny nothing," answered Jem hopelessly; and then he groaned "God help us! Why didn't he die in the frost and snow? Why did I warm him, when a babby, at my own fire, only to help to hang him arterwards?"

"Hang him! Nonsense; I tell you, Jem, you're a fool — an old, butter-hearted fool — and you know nothing. Here have you lived all your life with the worst of people about you — not but what folks at the very best are great rascals, every one of 'em — but here you have been up to your ears in villainy —

and yet you look upon everybody about you as innocent as shepherds and shepherdesses in white china. I'm ashamed of you, Jem; be a man, and think of the world as its rascality deserves. For, Lord! what a lump of roguery it is! How that the blessed sun should ever condescend to smile upon such a lot of wretches as we are, I can't tell!"

"No more can I," answered Jem: "but since the sun, as you say, does demean himself to show a good face to us, I think it's as little as we can do to try to do the same to one another."

Capstick, taken somewhat aback, looked suddenly round upon Jem; and then, feeling himself wholly unable to controvert this opinion, he simply said, "Jem, you're a fool."

A week passed, and the trial of St. Giles approached. It was strange to Mr. Capstick that so many of his customers would ask him about his health. "Why, what can ail the people?" he would say. "I was never better — never in all my life. I eat like a pig, and sleep like a dormouse; can any man do better than that?" But Mr. Capstick was not well. The biped pig made poor meals; the human dormouse had restless nights; and when dreaming, dreamt horrid visions of death and Newgate.

It wanted some ten days of the trial, when Bright Jem presented himself at Capstick's house. "You see," said Jem, "they're getting some money in the Lane so that they may have a lawyer for poor St. Giles. Well, they're a bad lot, I dare say; but you should only know what some of the poor souls have done."

"And what have they done?" asked Capstick, with what he meant for a sneer.

"Why, some as had two blankets have sold one on 'em; some with two gowns have pawned one o' them. It would make you bless yourself, Mr. Capstick, to see besides what things they've made twopences and threepences of — kettles, sarcepans, anything. It's wonderful to see how they do stick by one another."

"Crime, Mr. Aniseed, crime is a brazen cord — and certainly does hold rogues together," said Capstick.

"You may say what you like," said Jem, "but whenever I've looked up that horrid Lane, and seen men and women like devils, and children — poor creturs — like devils' little ones, — I never could have thought that in that dismal place there was after all a sort of good, that the very best of us wouldn't be any worse for having more of it.

"Very like; very like," said Capstick. "And I am to understand, that the people want to fee a lawyer?"

"That's it," replied Jem. "There's a Mr. Tangle, somewhere in Clifford's Inn; he's a sharp un. They say he'd get a chap out o' Newgate; get him out through a flaw no bigger than a key-hole. Well, I've been thinking — not that I can do much — but I've been thinking, that as we helped to get the boy into Newgate, if we was to give what money we could to help to get him out."

"And so defeat the ends of justice?" cried Capstick, and he frowned severely.

"Oh, I dare say it's wrong," said Jem; "nevertheless, if we could only get the boy safe off, he might

be a good un after all. Didn't you hear how he cried? Oh, there's heart in him yet, I'm sure there is. Well, then, you see —"

"I see perfectly," said Capstick, "you've come to ask me to subscribe to the fund for the lawyer?"

"Well, that's jest it," assented Jem.

"Forgetful of my serious responsibility as a witness — forgetful of the ends of justice — forgetful of what I owe to society — forgetful —"

"Forgetful," cried Jem, with animation, "of everything except of saving a child from the gallows."

"Mr. Aniseed," said Capstick very decidedly, "I am sorry to refuse you anything, but you must not let your feelings blind you: you mean well, but you have yet to learn that the best meaning men are those who often do the most mischief. In a word, Sir, I can have nothing to say to this business."

Bright Jem made no answer, but with a moody nod was about to leave the shop, when the muffin-maker called to him. "I think you said this attorney's name was Wrangle?"

"Tangle," said Jem, shortly.

"Tangle, Lyon's Inn?" said Capstick.

"Clifford's-Inn," cried Jem, a little sulkily, and then he darted from the shop.

It is most true that Mr. Tangle deserved the high reputation bestowed upon him by Jem. His office in Clifford's-Inn was considered a private outlet from Newgate. Many and many a time, when the fatal halter seemed inevitable, had Tangle, by some deft device, turned the running into a slip-knot, and the hangman been defrauded by the quibbler. Many a gentleman had Mr. Tangle restored to the road, none

at all the worse for durance. Many a highwayman, on his solitary midnight watch, might think with gratitude of the master-spirit of Clifford's-Inn.

It was the evening of the day on which Bright Jem solicited Capstick, and Mr. Tangle sat in the solitude of his chambers. He was sunk in profound study; possibly, pondering how to find or make a flaw: how to give to the line of right a zig-zag, profitable bend for some consulting client shut in Newgate stones. His clerk was out: therefore, his knocker being struck, he rose himself and opened the door. A tall, bulky man, wrapped in a great-coat, a hat slouched over his face, tied by a handkerchief that almost covered his features, stalked into the room. Mr. Tangle was not at all surprised: not at all. So many odd people — so strangely appointed — every sessions called upon him.

"You are Mr. Tangle," said a voice that most assuredly belonged to Capstick, the muffin-maker. Mr. Tangle bowed. "You are interested in the case of a boy, one St. Giles?"

"I have been consulted," said Tangle in his dry way. "A bad case; confessedly, a bad case; still, something may be done. You know 'till a man's hanged, there's always hope; that is, if there's always —"

"Money." Mr. Tangle smiled and nodded. Mr. Capstick took a small leathern bag from his pocket, from which he counted out ten guineas. "I am not a rich man, Mr. Tangle," said Capstick.

"I am sorry for it," said Tangle (and evidently with a feeling of sincerity): "otherwise the ten might have been fifty."

"But do what you can for that wretched boy — only save him from hanging, and there's twenty more."

"Thirty pounds," said Tangle; it's doing it — if indeed it's to be done at all — very cheap; too cheap. Nevertheless, as you're not a rich man, I'll not refuse money. What name?"

"Never mind that," said Capstick. "I think I've given you enough to show that I'm in earnest. Now, only save the child, and as God's in heaven you shall have the other twenty."

"We'll see what can be done," said Tangle, showing Capstick to the door — "I have hopes; great hopes."

And the trial came on, and St. Giles and Thomas Blast were arraigned for stealing a pony of the value of fifty pounds, the property of the Marquess of St. James. Nothing could be clearer than the evidence against the boy, as delivered by young St. James, Mrs. Simmer, and her servant. But legal proof was wanting against Blast. True, he had been seen talking to St. Giles, as the boy led the pony; but nothing more. There was no doubt that the man who had taken the animal from St. Giles in Long Lane was an accomplice of Blast's, but he was not to be found — there was no proof. Whereupon, Thomas Blast was acquitted; and young St. Giles found "Guilty, — Death."

CHAPTER IX.

“GUILTY, — DEATH!”

What familiar syllables were these in the good old times — the time of our history! In those happier days, how many goods and chattels, live stock and dead, were protected, watched by Death! Death was made by law the guardian of all things. Prime agent, great conservator of social right — grim keeper of the world's moveables. Death, a shepherd, avenged the wrongs of stolen mutton; Death stood behind every counter, protector of chapman's stock; Death was the day and night guard of the highway traveller against the highway thief; Death watched ox and ass; the goose on the common, the hen on the roost. Even at the altar, Death took his cautious stand, that Hymen might not be scoffed, defrauded by wicked bigamist. *De minimis curabat Mors.* Turn where he would, the rogue's path was dug with graves. Nevertheless, the world grew no better; made no visible return to that happy state, ere hemp was made a sovereign remedy for wrong. And so by degrees Death lost somewhat of his reputation with the great ones of the world; and by degrees many things were taken out of his charge. It was found that sheep were stolen, tradesmen's goods lifted, pockets picked, hen-roosts forced — and maids wickedly married by men already bound, — it was seen that these abominations continued and increased, aye, in the very face of the great ghastly

bugbear Death, and so his watch and ward were made a lighter task; he was gradually relieved of many of his social duties; the world, to the astonishment of some folks, still spinning on its axis, though the life of immortal man was not, as in the good old times, offered to stolen colt, to the king's gracious face unlawfully stamped in counterfeit metal, to a hundred other sins all made mortal by the wisdom of untaught humanity. Truly, justice, turning back the leaves of the gaol calender, might sit awhile in sackcloth and ashes, penitent for past transgressions — past wrongs committed in her moral blindness! The sword of justice! An awful weapon truly: a weapon, working out the will of highest Providence; a solemn instrument which man solemnly acknowledges. This has been, and may be. Yet, thinking of the world's mistakes; of the cruel blunders worked by law on man, the sword of justice — of so-called Christian justice robed and ermined — may sometimes seem to the eye of grieved humanity as terrible as the blood-dripping tomahawk of the wild revengeful savage. The sword of justice! May not the time come — it *will* come, as surely as the sun of far-off years — when justice shall lay down her sword? when with better wisdom, she shall vindicate her awful mission to mankind, yet shed no drop of blood?

Let us return to St. Giles; to the boy in his fifteenth year, spawned upon the world and reared by daily wrong and ignorance, a morsel for the hangman: now, a condemned thief, palsied and aghast with terror, upon the very threshold of the world; to be flung therefrom, an offering to the majesty of offended law. Grim majesty — ghastly Moloch! Stately wicked-

ness, with robes dyed in the blood of sinning ignorance! A majesty, that the principle of all evil may too often smile upon as its working genius here on earth. A majesty as cold and pulseless as the idol whose wooden nostrils know not the sacrifices its darkened worshippers prepare it. But St. Giles will now know there is a government — a knot of the wise and good, whose harmonious souls combined make up the music of the state; the moral melody that softens and refines the rugged, dull-eared mass. He will now know this; the hangman will teach it him. A sharp, short lesson; the first and last prepared him by a paternal state.

“Guilty — death!” Such was the verdict. Tom Blast breathed heavily, and a faint smile flickered at his lips as he felt assured of his escape. Still he durst not turn his eye towards his boy-victim in the dock. Conscience was at the felon’s heart; and seared, withered as it was, it felt the sudden horror of remorse. His features grew pale, then dark; were for a moment convulsed; then instantly — daring no look at St. Giles — he disappeared from the dock. The boy stared about him with a foolish gaze; and then began to sob. There was no terror — no anguish in his face. It was the grief of a boy doomed to a whipping, not the gibbet; and it was such sorrow — such seeming childish ignorance of the impending horror — that to those who looked upon him made his condition more terrible. And then again it seemed impossible that the sentence so sonorously uttered, should be carried out. Could it be that such an array of judges, such wisdom, such learning, such grave and reverend experience, should be opposed to a miserable child, of

no more self-accountability than a dog? Appalling odds! Could it be thought that the scene was a frightful reality of daily, breathing life? Was is not a grim farce — a hideous, foolish mockery? Could the wise hearts of men, fathers of well-taught, well-tended, happy children, doom that child to death? That miserable item of human ignorance, that awful reproach to those who made laws to protect property, but left the outcast poor a heedless prey to their own unbridled instincts? Nevertheless, the law would hang St. Giles; and grave, respectable church-going men, in the very cosiness of their ignorance, would clasp their hands, and raise their eyes, and pity and wonder at the wickedness of the new generation!

A turnkey in the dock took St. Giles by the hand, and in a moment the boy had disappeared. "Good God!" cried a voice, convulsed with grief. "Silence in the court!" exclaimed the crier; and immediately another wretch took his place at the bar, and the terrible course of law continued. It was Capstick, whose exclamation had called down the official rebuke; it was really Capstick, although even the wife of his bosom might have paused ere she acknowledged him; so suddenly and frightfully had the brief business of the trial wrought a change in him. His flesh seemed jaundiced, and his black eyes, violently dilated, rolled restlessly about. His face appeared of a sudden sharpened like the face of a sick man; and his arm shook, palsied, as with his nails he grasped the arm of Bright Jem. "Let us go," said Jem, chokingly, "we can do no good here;" and Capstick, staring stupidly about him, suffered himself to be led from the court. In a few moments they stood in the Old Bailey. It was a

lovely spring night. The breath of May, even in the Old Bailey, came sweet and odorous, carrying freshness to the heart and brain. The moon shone with brightest, purest lustre: all the stars of heaven seemed visible; all looking down in their bright tenderness, as though they looked upon a kindred sphere of purity and light, and loved it. Capstick gazed at the magnificence, and the tears thick and fast fell from him. Then in a subdued, a comforting voice, he said, "No, Jem, no; it's a wickedness to think it; there's a God in heaven, and they can't do it."

"Hadn't we better see Tangle, the lawyer?" asked Jem. "He hasn't done much, to be sure; still he may yet do something. I didn't see him nowhere in the court — saw nobody but his clerk."

"Yes, we'll see him — we'll see him," said Capstick. "He's a scoundrel; but then he's fitter for the world. For the truth is, Jem, we're all scoundrels." Jem made no answer to this charitable creed. "All scoundrels: and I'm about the poorest, meanest, shabbiest villain of the lot. And yet you'll see how I shall carry it off. They'll hang this wretched boy — oh, never doubt it, Jem! they're bad enough for anything — they'll hang him. And I shall still go on sleek and smooth in the world; making muffins and laying by the pennies; paying rent and taxes; owing no man a shilling, and so easily and pleasantly earning a good name, and being mightily trumped up for doing it. I shall go on being called a respectable man; and I shall grin and smile at the lie, and show a satin cheek to the world, as if the lie was true as gospel truth. And then I shall die and be buried with feathers: and Mrs. Capstick will put a stone over me

— I know her pride, Jem; I know she'll do it — a stone with a bouncing flam upon it; all lies — lies to the last. Oh, Jem," cried Capstick, groaningly, "if the devil ever takes churchyard walks, how he must chuckle and rub his brimstone hands, when he reads some of the tombstones! Eh? How he must hold his sides at the 'loving husbands,' 'affectionate fathers,' 'faithful friends,' and 'pious Christians,' that he sees advertised there! For *he* knows better, Jem; eh? *He* knows better," cried the muffin-maker with increasing bitterness.

"Well," said Jem, "I can't say; who can? But I should hope the devil knows nothing at all about the matter. Howsomever, be that as it may, he has nothing to do with the business that's brought us out to-night."

"I wish he hadn't, Jem, — I wish he hadn't," cried Capstick, with stifled emotion. "But here, walking as we are, down this blessed Fleet-street — oh, lord! doesn't it seem strange after what we've just left, to see the sight about us? — walking here, do you think the devil isn't pointing his finger at me, and saying with a grin to one of his imps, 'There goes the respectable muffin-maker that's sold a boy's blood for ten pounds.'"

"How can you talk in that way?" said Jem: "the devil's the father of lies, and only keeps up his character if he says so."

"Not a bit; it's the devil that speaks truth of our lies; that turns us inside out, and shames sanctified faces with the black hearts that were under 'em. I say, I have sold the boy — put the rope about his neck. And for what? for ten pounds. What a fine

fellow I thought myself when I stirred in the matter! What a lump of virtue — what a wonderful bit of public spirit I thought I was, when, day after day, I neglected my muffins and the partner of my hearth-stone, to go thief-catching. And I believed I was doing a fine thing — and so, you know I did, I crowed and cackled about the ends of justice. All a sham — all a brave flashy cloak to hide a rascal dirtiness. It was the thoughts of the ten guineas, Jem, the ten guineas, that called all the poison out of my heart, and has made me hang a wretched, untaught beggar-boy. Yes, I'm a pretty respectable scoundrel — a fine public-spirited miscreant, I am."

Bright Jem, used to the muffin-maker's humour, made no further answer to this self-reproach; but again urged the necessity of consulting Tangle. "It can't be done to-night — but we'll at him the first thing to-morrow," said Capstick.

"To-morrow's Sunday," said Jem.

"What of that?" asked Capstick. "People come into the world on Sundays, so it can't be unlawful to help to save 'em from going out of it — look there, Jem, and Capstick pointed to a carriage rolling rapidly past.

"That's the Marquess's — come from the trial. There's young St. James in it; well, he's going to better comfort than a stone cell. Howsomever, he's a fine fellow — a kind, good heart is in that little chap, I'm sure of it. How nicely he give his evidence, didn't he? And how kindly he seemed to look at St. Giles in the dock; as much as to say, 'Poor fellow, I wish I could get you out o' that!' He'll make a true man, that boy will," said Jem; and then

he mournfully added, "and so would poor St. Giles. Ha! if when Susan brought him home out o' the snow, if he and young St. James had been made to change berths, eh? There'd have been a different account of both of 'em, I should think. And yet you see how the poor's treated; just as if they come into the world with wickedness upon 'em; a kind of human natur vermin — things born to do all sorts of mischief, and then to be hung up for doing it."

"We'll go to Tangle to-morrow — early to-morrow," said Capstick; who, buried in his compunctious grief, had given no ear to the reflections of Jem. "Good night; early to-morrow." And the muffin-maker suddenly broke from his companion, and strided home — a miserable home to him, whose acute sensibility reproached him as unworthy of the household comforts about him. He looked upon the part he had taken with intense remorse. The would-be misanthrope loathed himself for what he deemed his selfishness of heart — his cruelty towards wretchedness and ignorance. Within a few steps of his door, he paused to call up — with all the power he had — a look of serenity, of decent composure. Somehow, he felt uneasy at the thoughts of meeting his wife. At length he prepared himself, and, with a tolerably successful face of tranquillity, crossed his threshold. He exchanged but one look with his wife; it was enough: it was plain she knew the fate of St. Giles. How should it be otherwise? A score of neighbours, customers, had thronged the shop with the mortal intelligence; and some ventured to hope that Mr. Capstick wouldn't sleep the worse for his day's work — others begged to ask if the muffin-maker thought the

hanging of a poor child would bring a blessing on him — and some hinted an opinion that those who were so sharp after evil-doers had commonly not the cleanest consciences themselves. These interrogatives and inuendos had to be severally answered and warded by the muffin-maker's wife, who, to give her due credit, was not slow at any kind of reply, and was truly a very respectable mistress "of fence." Nevertheless, the exercise would heat a temper never prone to coldness, and in the present instance raised to boiling heat, by what she deemed the malice of her neighbours. And yet, it would have made Capstick's conjugal heart glad again, had he heard how eloquently, how magnificently his acts were defended by his wife: for Mrs. Capstick most volubly and vehemently begged to assure her neighbours, "that there was not a man in the parish fit to wipe her husband's shoes," — "that he was only wrong in being too honest," — "that a better soul, or kinder-hearted creature, never walked," — and that, in short, in the depth of her charity, she "only wished that those who spoke a word against him had half such a husband: the neighbourhood would be all the quieter for it, that's what she knew, if they had." All this did honour to Mrs. Capstick, and would doubtless have solaced the wounded bosom of her lord, could he only have known it; but Mrs. Capstick had too much humility to vaunt her own virtues, therefore she breathed no word of the matter to her well-defended husband. Not that, the shop being closed, and the wedded couple seated at the fireside, Mrs. Capstick was silent; certainly not; for, whilst the muffin-maker tried to solace himself with a pipe, his wife thus declared herself: —

"Well, Mr. Capstick, now I hope you're satisfied? I hope you've made a nice day's work of it! A pretty name you've got in the parish! There'll be no living here — I'll not live here, I can tell you. All the world will point at you, and say, 'There goes the man that hanged that wretched little child!'"

Capstick suddenly took the pipe from his mouth, and stared at his wife. It was strange: he had himself said something of the kind to Bright Jem. He then renewed his smoking, speaking no syllable in answer to his spouse; and yet eloquently replying to her philippics by pooh-poohing the smoke from him, now in short, hasty, irascible puffs, and now in a heavy volume of vapour. There was a majesty in his manner that seemed to quietly defy the assaults of his better moiety. There seemed, too, to be no getting at him for the clouds in which he industriously involved himself.

"And I should like to know what your satisfaction will be for what you've done! Why, you'll never have another happy moment; you can't have! That poor child will always be before your eyes. And, then, what a beautiful business you'll lose; for nobody will deal with you. Ha! nice airs the Gibbsses will give themselves, now." (The Gibbsses, be it known, were new-come muffin-makers, struggling in hopeless rivalry with the muffins of Capstick.) "Everybody will go to them: I'm sure I don't think 'twill be any use our opening the shop on Monday. And all about ten guineas! Ha, they'll be a dear ten guineas to you — better have lost 'em ten times over. And so young a child — only fourteen! To hang him!

Don't you think, Mr. Capstick, his ghost will follow you?"

Capstick made no answer; but his eye, turned ominously upon his wife, began to glow like a coal, and he puffed at the smoke like a man labouring with himself. Beautiful philosophy! Full soon the muffin-maker's eye shone with its old tranquil light, and again he smoked calmly — desperately calmly. Still Mrs. Capstick continued the punishment of her tongue; but Capstick had conquered himself, and still replied not. At length in the very heat and fullest pitch of her complaint, Capstick rose, and softly laying down his pipe, said, "Mary Anne, I'm going to bed." Poor Capstick! He came home with his heart bleeding; and a little tenderness, a little conjugal sympathy, would have been a value to him; but — as people say of greater matters — it was not to be.

Capstick rose early; and, speedily joined by Bright Jem, both took their way to Mr. Tangle's private mansion, Red Lion Square. It was scarcely nine o'clock, when the muffin-maker knocked at the lawyer's door. It was quite impossible that Mr. Tangle should be seen. "But the business," cried Capstick to the man-servant — a hybrid between a groom and a footman — "the business is upon life and death."

"Bless you," said the man, "that makes no difference whatever. We deal so much in life and death, that we think nothing of it. It's like plums to a grocer, you know. Mr. Tangle never can be seen of a Sunday before half-past ten; a quarter to eleven he goes, of course, to church. The Sabbath, he always says, should be a day of rest." And Tangle — it

was his only self-indulgence — illustrated this principle by lying late in bed every Sunday morning to read his papers. Nevertheless, with smoothly shaven face, and with an all-unworldly look, he was, ere the church-bell ceased, enshrined in the family pew. There was he, with his wife, decorously garnished with half-a-dozen children, sons and daughters, patterns of Sabbath piety; of seventh-day Christianity. "After six days' hard work, what a comfort it was," he would say, "to enjoy church of a Sunday!" And Tangle, after his fashion, did enjoy it: he enjoyed the respectability which church-going threw about him; he enjoyed his worldly ease and superiority, as manifested in his own cosily-furnished pew. Looking upon the pauper worshippers on the benches, and then contemplating the comforts of his own nook, he felt very proud of his Christianity. And in this way did Mr. Tangle attend church. It was a decent form due to society, and especially to himself. He went to church as he went to his office — as a matter of business; though he would have been mightily shocked had such a motive been attributed to him.

"I'll come at half-past ten," said Capstick, "for I must see him." The servant looked stolidly at the muffin-maker, and, without a word, closed the door. "He can then tell us," said Capstick to Jem, "when he can see us in the afternoon. And now, Jem, we can only stroll about till the time comes." And so they walked on silently; for both felt oppressed with the belief that their errand to the lawyer would be fruitless; yet both were determined to try every means, however hopeless. They walked and sauntered, and the church-bells rang out, summoning Christian con-

gregations to common worship. "There's something beautiful in the church-bells, don't you think so, Jem?" asked Capstick, in a subdued tone. "Beautiful and hopeful; — they talk to high and low, rich and poor in the same voice; there's a sound in 'em that should scare pride, and envy, and meanness of all sorts from the heart of man; that should make him look upon the world with kind, forgiving eyes; that should make the earth itself seem to him, at least for a time, a holy place. Yes, Jem; there's a whole sermon in the very sound of the church-bells, if we have only the ears to rightly understand it. There's a preacher in every belfry, Jem, that cries, 'Poor, weary, struggling, fighting creatures — poor human things! take rest, be quiet. Forget your vanities, your follies; your week-day craft, your heart-burnings! And you, ye human vessels, gilt and painted; believe the iron tongue that tells ye, that, for all your gilding, all your colours, ye are of the same Adam's earth with the beggar at your gates. Come away, come, cries the church-bell, and learn to be humble; learning that, however daubed and stained, and stuck about with jewels, you are but grave clay! Come, Dives, come; and be taught that all your glory, as you wear it, is not half so beautiful in the eye of Heaven as the sores of uncomplaining Lazarus! And ye poor creatures, livid and faint — stunted and crushed by the pride and hardness of the world, — come, come, cries the bell, with the voice of an angel, come and learn what is laid up for ye. And learning, take heart, and walk among the wickednesses, the cruelties of the world, calmly as Daniel walked among the lions.'" Here Capstick, flushed and excited, wrought beyond himself, suddenly paused.

Jem stared, astonished, but said no word. And then, Capstick, with calmer manner, said, "Jem, is there a finer sight than a stream of human creatures passing from a Christian church?"

"Why," said Jem, "that's as a man may consider with himself. It may be, as you say, a very fine sight — and it may be, what I call a very sad and melancholy show, indeed."

"Sad and melancholy!" cried Capstick; "you'll have a hard task to prove that."

"Perhaps so, only let me do it after my own fashion." Capstick nodded assent. "Bless you! I've thought of it many a time when I've seen a church emptying itself into the street. Look here, now. I'll suppose there's a crowd of people — a whole mob of 'em going down the church-steps. And at the church-door, there is I don't know how many roods of Christian carriages, with griffins painted on the panels, and swords, and daggers, and battle-axes, that, as well as I can remember, Jesus doesn't recommend nowhere: and there's the coachmen, half-asleep, and trying to look religious; and there's footmen following some and carrying the Holy Bible after their misuses, just as to-morrow they'll carry a spanel, — and that's what they call *their* humility. Well, that's a pleasant sight, isn't it? And then for them who're not ashamed to carry their own big prayer-books, with the gold leaves twinkling in the sun, as if they took pains to tell the world they'd been to church, — well, how many of them have been there in earnest? How many of them go there with no thought whatsoever, only that it's Sunday, — church-going day? And so they put on what they think religion that day, just as I

put on a clean shirt. Bless you! sometimes I've stood and watched the crowd, and I've said to myself, 'Well, I should like to know how many of you will remember you're Christians till next week? How many of you go to-morrow morning to your offices, and counting-houses, and stand behind your counters, and, all in the way of business, — all to scramble up the coin — forget you're miserable sinners, while every other thing you do may make you more miserable, only you never feel it, so long as it makes you more rich?' And so there's a Sunday conscience like a Sunday coat; and folks who'd get on in the world, put the coat and the conscience carefully by, and only wear 'em once a week. Well, to think how many such folks go to worship, — why, then I must say it, Master Capstick, to stand inside a church and watch a congregation coming out, however you may stare, may be — I can't help, after my fashion, thinking so — a melancholy sight indeed. Lord love you, when we see what some people do all the week, — people who're staunch at church, remember — I can't help thinking, there's a good many poor souls who're only Christians at morning and arternoon service."

Capstick looked earnestly at Jem and said, "My dear fellow, it's all very well between you and me to say this; but don't say it to the world; don't, Jem, if you wouldn't be hunted, harried, stoned to death, like a mad dog. Folks won't be turned inside out after this fashion, without revenging the treatment with all sorts of bad names. Very pure folks won't be held up to the light and shown to be very dirty bottles, without paying back hard abuse for the impertinence. Jem, whatever coat a man may wear, never see a hole

in it. Though it may be full of holes as a net, never see 'em; but take your hat off to the coat, as if it was the best bit of broad-cloth in the world, without a flaw or a thread dropt, and with the finest bits of gold lace upon it. In this world, Jem, woe to the man with an eye for holes! He's a beast, a wretch, an evil-speaker, an uncharitable thinker, a pest to be put down. And Jem, when the respectable hypocrites make common cause with one another, the Lord help the poor devil they give chase to!"

"I always speak my mind," said Jem.

"It's an extravagance that has ruined many a man," said the muffin-maker. "But enough of this, Jem; it's just the time to catch Tangle before he goes out." A few moments brought them to the lawyer's door. Ere, however, the muffin-maker could touch the knocker, the door opened, and Mr. Tangle, his wife, his two sons and two daughters presented themselves, all, the females especially, being dressed for church. Yes; dressed for church; carefully, elaborately arrayed and ornamented, to sustain the severest criticism that, during the hours of devotion, might be passed upon them by sister sinners.

"Mr. Tangle," said Capstick, "I won't keep you a minute: but when can I call on —"

"Nothing secular to-day, Sir," said Tangle, and he waved both his hands.

"But, Mr. Tangle, there's life and death, Sir," — cried Capstick, but Tangle interrupted him.

"What's life and death, Sir? What are they, Sir, that we should do anything secular to-day?"

"But, Mr. Tangle, it's the fate of that poor

wretched boy; and there isn't a minute to lose," urged the muffin-maker.

"I shall be very glad to see you in the way of business, to-morrow," replied Tangle, labouring to appear very placid; "but I beg of you, my good man, not to disturb the current of my thoughts — of my Sabbath feelings — with anything secular to-day. To me the world is dead on Sundays."

"But won't you do good on Sundays?" cried Capstick. — "Your religion doesn't forbid that, I suppose?"

"My good man, let me have none of your free-thinking ribaldry here. This is my door-step, and don't defile my threshold with your profanity. I have given you my answer. Nothing secular to-day." Saying this with increased vehemence, Mr. Tangle was bustling from the door after his family — who, looking wondering looks at Capstick and Jem, had walked stately on, — when a carriage rapidly turned the square, and in a moment stopped at Tangle's door. Instantly, Mr. Tangle brought himself up; and cast, certainly, a look of secular curiosity towards the carriage-windows. In an instant, young Lord St. James alighted, and was followed by his tutor — worn somewhat since we last met him — Mr. Folder. Mr. Tangle immediately recognised the young nobleman, and although it was Sunday, advanced towards him with pains-taking respect. "Your wife told us you were come here, Mr. Capstick," said his lordship to the muffin-maker.

"Pray, Sir, can we consult you upon a business that is somewhat urgent?" said Folder to the attorney.

"Certainly, Sir; anything for his lordship. Excuse

me one moment;" and Tangle, with unwonted agility, skipped after his wife and family. 'They must go to church without him. A lord, a young lord, had called upon him — that sweet young gentleman in the sky-blue coat and lace-collar — and, the business was imminent. He, the husband and father, would join them as soon as he could. With many backward, admiring looks at the lovely little nobleman, did Mr. Tangle's family proceed on their way to church, whilst Tangle — the groaning victim to secular affairs — ushered young St. James and Mr. Folder into his mansion. "We can do nothing without you," said St. James to Capstick and Bright Jem; who thereupon gladly followed, the attorney marvelling at the familiarity of the boy nobleman.

"What can I have the honour to do for his lordship?" asked Mr. Tangle, with a smile dirt cheap at six and eight-pence.

"We should not have troubled you to-day," said St. James, "only you see —"

"Don't name it, my dear young lord!" exclaimed Tangle.

"Only," chimed in Mr. Folder, "they talk about hanging on Wednesday."

"Very true," said Tangle; "I believe the affair comes off on Wednesday. A great pity, Sir! Quite a child, Sir; and with good parts — very good parts. Nevertheless, Sir, the crime of horse-stealing increases hourly; and without some example is made, some strong example is made —"

"Why, they hanged four for horse-stealing last sessions," said Capstick.

Tangle looked round with astonishment at the in-

terraption, and then observed — "That only proves they don't hang enough."

"My opinion, Mr. Tangle; quite my opinion. We want stronger laws, Sir; much stronger. If we were to hang for everything, there'd be an end of crime altogether. It's because we only punish by halves — now hanging one, and now another — that we have such a continual growth of vice. We ought to pull up crime by the roots; now our present pruning system makes it flourish the stronger. However, his young lordship doesn't think so. He has all the generosity of youth, and insists that St. Giles shall not be hanged."

"God bless him!" cried Capstick.

"Amen!" said Bright Jem.

"I must request that we have no interruption," said Tangle, looking loftily at the two offenders. "Perhaps, Sir," and the lawyer turned to Folder, "perhaps, you will state your case."

"Just a word in private," said Folder; and Tangle immediately led him into a small adjoining room, and closed the door. "You see, Mr. Tangle," said Folder, "I consider this to be a very foolish, weak business, but the young gentleman is a spoilt child, and spoilt children will have their way. In one word, his lordship must be humoured, and therefore St. Giles — though it would be much better for him to be put at once quietly out of further mischief — must not be hanged. The Marquess has his own notions on the matter; proper notions, too, they are, Mr. Tangle; notions that do honour to him as a legislator, and would, I verily believe, let the law take its course. But, poor man! what can he do?"

"Do what he likes, can't he?" asked Tangle.

"By no means. You see, it is with the boy as it was with the boy Themistocles," said Mr. Folder.

"Really?" observed Tangle.

"One of Plutarch's own parallels. The boy rules the Marchioness, and the Marchioness rules —"

"I understand," said Tangle: "rules the Marquess. It will happen so."

"And therefore, the sum and end of it all is, the horse-stealer must be saved. Bless you! his young lordship has threatened to fall sick and die, if St. Giles is hanged; and has so frightened his poor mother, who again has made the Marquess so anxious, that — the fact is, we've come to you."

"It's a great pity that I didn't know all this before. The case, my dear Sir, was a nothing — a very trumpery case, indeed; but then, to a man of my extensive practice, it was really not worth attending to. Otherwise, and to have obliged the Marquess, I could have made sure of an *alibi*. It's a great pity that so noble a family should be so troubled, and by such riff-raff!" said Tangle.

"It is, Sir; it is," said Folder — "you can feel for us. Now, there's no doubt that, in so trifling a matter, the Marquess has more than sufficient interest to save a thief or two; nevertheless, I have suggested that a petition should be got up by the boy's friends — if the wicked creature has any friends — and that so the Marquess — you understand?"

"Perfectly," replied Tangle: what would he not understand in such a case? "There is nothing more easy than a petition. How many signatures would you

like to it? Any number — though fifty will be as good as five hundred."

"Do you think the jury would sign?" asked Mr. Folder. "Not that it's of any consequence; only for the look of the thing."

"The foreman, I know, would not," said Tangle. "He lost a colt himself three years ago, and isn't yet settled to the injury. Nevertheless, we can get up a very tidy sort of petition; and with the Marquess's interest — well! that young St. Giles is a lucky little scoundrel! he'll make his fortune at Botany Bay."

"And now, Mr. Tangle, that we understand one another, we'll join, if you please, his lordship. — Well, my lord," said Folder, returning, "I have talked the matter over with Mr. Tangle, and, though he gives very little hope —"

"There's all the hope in the world," said Capstick, "for his lordship says he'll take the petition himself to the Minister, who's his father's friend, and, if I may advise the Marchioness, his mother —"

"My good man," observed Mr. Folder, "we in no way need your advice in the matter. Hold your tongue."

"Shouldn't mind at all obliging you, Sir, in any other way," said the unruffled Capstick; "but, as his young lordship here, as he tells me, has been to my shop and all to see me about the matter, I think my tongue's quite at his service."

"To be sure it is, Capstick," said young St. James, "go on. Mr. Folder says they'd better hang St. Giles; and papa says so too; but they sha'n't do it for all that. Why, I should never have the heart to mount a horse again."

"A noble little chap!" whispered Bright Jem to Capstick.

"And so, as I told you, Capstick, I went to your house, as you know all about the boy, and the boy's friend, to see about a petition; for that's the way, they tell me —"

"Give yourself no further trouble," said Tangle, "the petition shall be prepared, my lord. I'll do it myself, this very day, though the affair is secular. Nevertheless, to oblige your lordship —"

"You're a good fellow," said young St. James patronising the lawyer; and, all preliminaries being settled, the conference concluded.

CHAPTER X.

AND young St. Giles lay in Newgate, sinking, withering under sentence of death. After a time, he never cried, or clamoured; he shed no tear, breathed no syllable of despair; but, stunned, stupified, seemed as if idiotcy was growing on him. The ordinary — a good, zealous man — endeavoured, by soothing, hopeful words, to lead the prisoner, as the jail phrase has it, to a sense of his condition. Never had St. Giles received such teaching! Condemned to die, he for the first time heard of the abounding love of Christianity — of the goodness and affection due from man to man. The story seemed odd to him; strange, very strange; yet he supposed it was all true. Nevertheless — he could not dismiss the thought, it puzzled him. Why had he never been taught all this before? And why should he be punished, hanged for doing wrong; when the good, rich, fine people, who all of them loved their neighbours like themselves, had never taught him what was right? Was it possible that Christianity was such a beautiful thing — and being so, was it possible that good, earnest, kind-hearted Christians would kill him?

St. Giles had scarcely eight-and-forty hours to live. It was almost Monday noon, when the ordinary — having attended the other prisoners — entered the cell of the boy thief. He had been separated, by the desire of the minister, from his miserable companions, that their evil example of hardihood — their reckless

bravado — might not wholly destroy the hope of growing truth within him. A turnkey attended St. Giles, reading to him. And now the boy would raise his sullen eyes upon the man, as he read of promises of grace and happiness eternal: and now his heart would heave as though he was struggling with an agony that seemed to suffocate him — and now a scornful, unbelieving smile would play about his mouth — and he would laugh with defying bitterness. And then he would leer in the face of the reader, as though he read some fairy tale, some pretty story, to amuse and gull him. Poor wretch! Let the men who guide the world — the large-brained politicians, who tinker the social scheme, making themselves the masters and guardians of their fellow-men — let them look into this Newgate dungeon; let them contemplate this blighted human bud; this child felon, never taught the path of right, and now to be hanged for his most sinful ignorance. What a wretched, sullen outcast! What a darkened, loathsome thing! And now comes the clergyman — the state divine, be it remembered — to tell him that he is treasured with an immortal soul; that — with mercy shed upon him — he will in a few hours be a creature of glory before the throne of God! Oh, politicians! Oh, rulers of the world! Oh, law-making masters and taskers of the common million, may not this cast-off wretch, this human nuisance, be your accuser at the bar of Heaven? Eggregious folly! Impossible! What — stars and garters impeached by rags and tatters! St. James denounced by St. Giles! Impudent and ridiculous! Yet here, we say, comes the reverend priest — the Christian preacher, with healing, honied words, whose Book — *your* Book —

with angelic utterance, says no less. Let us hear the clergyman and his forlorn pupil.

"Well, my poor boy," said the ordinary, with an affectionate voice and moistening eyes: "well, my child, and how is it with you? Come, you are better; you look better; you have been listening to what your good friend Robert here has been reading to you. And we are all your friends, here. At least, we all want to be. Don't you think so?"

St. Giles slowly lifted his eyes towards the speaker. He then sullenly answered, — "No, I don't."

"But you ought to try to think so, my boy; it's wicked not to try," said the ordinary, very tenderly.

"If you're all my friends, why do you keep me here?" said St. Giles. "Friends! I never had no friends."

"You must not say that; indeed, you must not. All our care is to make you quiet and happy in this world, that you may be happier in the world you're going to. You understand me, St. Giles? My poor dear boy, you understand me? The world you're going to?" The speaker, inured as he was to scenes of blasphemy, of brute indifference, and remorseful agony, was deeply touched by the forlorn condition of the boy; who could not, would not, understand a tenderness, the end of which was to surrender him softened to the hangman. "You have thought, my dear — I say, you have thought of the world" — and the minister paused — "the world you are going to?"

"What's the use of thinking about it?" asked St. Giles. "I knows nothing of it."

"That, my boy, is because you are obstinate, and I am sorry to say it, wicked, and so won't try to know

about it. Otherwise, if you would give all your heart and soul to prayer, —”

“I tell you, Sir, I never was learnt to pray,” cried St. Giles, moodily; “and what’s the use of praying?”

“You would find it open your heart, St. Giles; and though you see nothing now, if you were only to pray long and truly, you would find the darkness go away from your eyes, and you’d see such bright and beautiful things about you, and you’d feel as light and happy as if you had wings at your back; you would, indeed. Then you’d feel that all we are doing for you is for the best; then, my poor boy,” said the ordinary with growing fervour, “then you’d feel what Christian love is.”

“Robert’s been reading to me about that,” said St. Giles, “but I can’t make it out no-how. He says that Christian love means that we shouldn’t do to nobody what we wouldn’t like nobody to do to ourselves.”

“A good boy,” said the ordinary, “that is the meaning, though not the words. I’m glad you’ve so improved.”

“And for all that, you tell me that I must think o’ dying — think of another world and all that — think of going to Tyburn, and, and” — here the boy fell hoarse; his face turned ash-colour, and reeling, he was about to fall, when the ordinary caught him in his arms, and again placed him on a seat. “It’s nothin’ — nothin’ at all,” cried St. Giles, struggling with himself — “I’m all right; I’m game.”

“Don’t say that, child; I can’t hear you say that: I would rather see you in tears and pain than trying to be game, as you call it. That, my boy, is only

adding crime to wickedness. Come, we were talking of Christian love," said the ordinary.

"I know nothin' about it," said St. Giles; "all I know is this, — it isn't true; it can't be true."

"Tell me; why not? Come, let me hear all you'd say," urged the clergyman tenderly.

"'Cause if it means that nobody should do to nobody what nobody would like to have done to themselves, why does anybody keep me locked up here? Why did the judge say I was to be — you know, Mister?"

"That was for doing wrong, my boy: that was for your first want of Christian love. You were no Christian when you stole the horse," said the ordinary. "Had the horse been yours, you would have felt wronged and injured had it been stolen from you? You see that, eh, my boy?"

"Didn't think o' that," said St. Giles gloomily — "But I didn't steal it: 'twas all along o' Tom Blast; and now he's got off; and I'm here in the Jug. You don't call that justice, no how, do you? But I don't care; they may do what they like with me; I'll be game."

"No, my dear boy, you must know better: you must, indeed — you must give all your thoughts to prayer, and —"

"It's of no use, Mister; I tell you I never was learnt to pray, and I don't know how to go about it. More than that, I feel somehow ashamed to do it. And besides, for all your talk, Mister, and you talk very kind to me, I must say, I can't feel like a Christian, as you call it; for I can't see why Christians should want to hang me if Christians are such good people as you talk about."

"But then, my poor boy," said the ordinary, "though young, you must remember, you're an old sinner. You've done much wickedness."

"I never done nothing but what I was taught; and if you say — and Bob there's been reading it to me — that the true Christian forgives every body — well then, in course, the judge and all the nob's are no Christians, else wouldn't they forgive me? Wouldn't they like it so, to teach me better, and not to kill me? But I don't mind; I'll be game; see if I don't be game — precious!"

The ordinary, with a perplexed look, sighed deeply. The sad condition of the boy, the horrid death awaiting him, the natural shrewdness with which he combated the arguments employed for his conversion, affected the worthy clergyman beyond all past experience. "Miserable little wretch!" he thought, "it will be worst of murders, if he dies thus." And then, again, he essayed to soften the child felon, who seemed determined to stand at issue with his spiritual counsellor; to recede no step, but to the gallows foot to defy him. It would be his ambition, his glory — if he must die — to die game. He had heard the praises bestowed upon such a death — had known the contemptuous jeering flung upon the repentant craven — and *he* would be the theme of eulogy in Hog Lane — *he* would not be laughed, sneered at for "dying dunghill." And this temper so grew and strengthened in St. Giles, that, at length, the ordinary, wearied and hopeless, left his forlorn charge, promising soon to return, and hoping, in his own words, to find the prisoner "a kinder, better, and more Christian boy."

"It's no use your reading that stuff to me," said

St. Giles, as the turnkey was about to resume his book; "I don't understand nothin' of it; and it's too late to learn. But I say, can't you tell us somethin' of Turpin and Jack Sheppard, eh, — something prime, to give us pluck?"

"Come, come," answered the man, "it's no use going on in this way. You must be quiet and listen to me; it's all for your good, I tell you: all for your good."

"My good! Well, that's pretty gammon, that is. I should like to know what can be for my good if I'm to be hanged? Ha! ha! See if I don't kick my shoes off, that's all." And St. Giles would *not* listen; but sat on the stool, swinging his legs backwards and forwards, and singing one of the melodies known in Hog Lane — poor wretch! it had been a cradle melody to him, — whilst the turnkey vainly endeavoured to soothe and interest him. At length the man discontinued his hopeless task; and, in sheer listlessness, leaning his back against the wall, fell asleep. And now St. Giles was left alone. And now, relieved of importunity, did he forego the bravado that had supported him, and solemnly think of his approaching end? Did he, with none other but the eye of God in that stone cell upon him, did he shrink and wither beneath the look; and, on bended knees, with opened heart, and flowing, repentant tears, did he pray for Heaven's compassion — God's sweet mercy? No. Yet thoughts, deep, anxious thoughts were brooding in his heart. His face grew older with the meditation that shadowed it. All his being seemed compressed, intensified in one idea. Gloomily, yet with whetted eyes, he looked around his cell; and still darker and darker

grew his face. Could he break prison? Such was the question — the foolish, idle, yet flattering question that his soul put to itself. All his recollections of the glory of Turpin and Sheppard crowded upon him — and what greater glory would it be for him if he could escape! He, a boy to do this! He to be sung in ballads — to be talked of, huzzaed, and held up for high example, long after he should be dead — passed for ever from the world? The proud thought glowed within him, made his heart heave, and his eyes sparkle. And then he looked about his cell, and the utter hopelessness of the thought fell upon him, withering his heart. Yet again and again, although to be crushed with new despair, he gazed about him, dreaming of liberty without that wall of flint. And thus his waking hours passed; and thus, in the visions of the night, his spirit busied itself in hopeful vanity.

The Tuesday morning came, and again the clergyman visited the prisoner. The boy looked paler, thinner — no more. There was no softness in his eyes, no appealing glance of hope: but a fixed and stubborn look of inquiry. "He didn't know nothing of what the parson had to say, and he didn't want to be bothered. It was all gammon!" These were the words of the boy felon, then — such was the humanity of the law; poor law! what a long nonage of discretion has it passed! — then within a day's span of the grave.

As the hour of death approached, the clergyman became more assiduous, fervent, nay passionate in his appeals to the prisoner; who still strengthened himself in opposition to his pastor. "My dear boy, — my poor child — miserable, helpless creature! — the

grave is open before you — the sky is opening above you! — Die without repentance, and you will pass into the grave, and never — never know immortal blessings! Your soul will perish — perish as I have told you — in fire, in fire eternal!"

St. Giles swayed his head to and fro, and with a sneer asked, "What's the good o' all this? Haven't you told me so, Mister, agin and agin?"

The ordinary groaned almost in despair, yet still renewed his task. "The heavens, I tell you, are opening for you; repent, my child; repent, poor boy, and you will be an immortal spirit, welcomed by millions of angels."

St. Giles looked with bitter incredulity at his spiritual teacher. "Well, if all that's true," he said, "it isn't so hard to be hanged, arter all. But I don't think the nob's love me so well, as to send me to sich a place as that."

"Nay, my poor boy," said the ordinary, "you will not, cannot, understand me, until you pray. Now, kneel, my dear child, kneel, and let us pray together." Saying this, the ordinary fell upon his knees; but St. Giles, folding his arms, so planted himself as to take firmer root of the ground; and so he stood with moody, determined looks, whilst the clergyman poured forth a passionate prayer that the heart of the young sinner might be softened; that it might be turned from stone into flesh, and become a grateful sacrifice to the throne of God. And whilst this prayer, in deep and solemn tones, rose from the prison-cell, he for whom the prayer was formed, seemed to grow harder, more obdurate, with every syllable. Still, he refused to bend his knee at the supplication of the clergyman,

but stood eyeing him with a mingled look of incredulity, defiance, and contempt. "God help you, poor lost lamb!" cried the ordinary, as he rose.

"Now, I hope we shall have no more o' that," was the only answer of St. Giles.

The ordinary was about to quit the cell, when the door was opened, and the governor of the jail, attended by the head turnkey, entered. "My dear Sir, I am glad to find you here," — said the governor to the ordinary. "I have a pleasing duty to perform; a duty that I know it will delight you to witness." The ordinary glanced at a paper held by the governor; his eyes brightened; and clasping his hands, he fervently uttered — "Thank God!"

The governor then turned to St. Giles, who suddenly looked anxious and restless. "Prisoner," he said, "it is my happiness to inform you, that his gracious Majesty has been mercifully pleased to spare your life. You will not suffer with the unfortunate men to-morrow. You understand me, boy" — for St. Giles looked suddenly stupified — "you understand me, that the good king, whom you should ever pray for, has, in the hope that you will turn from the wickedness of your ways, determined to spare your life? You will be sent out of the country; and time given you that, if you properly use it, will make you a good and honest man."

St. Giles made no answer, but trembled violently from head to foot. Then his face flushed red as flame, and covering it with his hands, he fell upon his knees; and the tears ran streaming through his fingers. "Pray with me; pray for me!" he cried, in broken voice, to the ordinary.

And the ordinary knelt, and rendered up "humble and hearty thanks" for the mercy of the king.

We will not linger in the prison — St. Giles was destined for Botany Bay. Mr. Capstick was delighted, in his own way, that the ends of justice would be satisfied; and whilst he rejoiced with the triumph of justice, he did not forget the evil-doer; for St. Giles received a packet from the muffin-maker; containing sundry little comforts for his voyage.

"We shall never see him again, Jem," said Mrs. Aniseed, as she left Newgate weeping; having taken her farewell of the young transport. "He's gone for ever from us."

"Not he," said Bright Jem; "we shall see him again another feller quite — a true man, yet; I'm sure of it."

CHAPTER XI.

SOME nine years had passed since young St. Giles — the fortunate object of royal mercy — was sent from England a doomed slave for life. For life! Hope, so far as man can kill it in the heart of his fellow, was dead to the convict. He had sinned against the law, and its offended majesty — for such was and is the phrase — denied to the offender the reward of better conduct. Man, in the loftiness of his own pure thoughts, in the besetting consciousness of his own immaculate worth, deems his criminal brother incapable of future good, and therefore considers only the best security of the machine; how the bones and muscles, the brute strength of the engine may be withheld from further mischief. It matters little to the guardian of the laws, to the maker of statutes for the protection of property, what aggravated demon, what pining, penitent spirit, yearning for better thoughts, may dwell within the felon, so that the chain at his leg be of sufficient weight and hindrance. How very recent is it, that many of the good people of this world did not consider a part of their very goodness to be in their belief of the incorrigibility of the felon! It was to make too familiar an approach to their respectability to suggest the probability of amendment in the doomed thief. It was, in a manner, to hold cheap their honesty, to suppose the virtue attainable by the once wicked. Human arrogance is, assuredly, never so

pitiable as when, in the smug belief of its own election, it looks upon its fellow in this world as irrevocably lost. But then, there is a sort of virtue that, not particularly shining in itself, has need of vice to throw it out; just as the lights of Rembrandt owe their lustre to the shadows about them. Considered after this hard fashion — and full well we know the sort of worthy people who will shake their heads at our miserable bitterness — yes, bitterness is the word — there is a kind of respectable man, who, although he may disallow the obligation, is somewhat indebted for his respectability to the proved rascal. The convicted knave is the dark tint to his little speck of yellow white: he is lustrous only by contrast. And after this short, uncharitable essay on black and white, we resume our history; leaving for the present the events of nine years unregistered — nine years from the time that young St. Giles quitted Newgate for the genial clime of Botany Bay.

It was a beautiful spring evening — “last of the spring, yet fresh with all its green.” The peace of heaven seemed upon the earth. An hour and scene when the heart is softened and subdued by the spirit of beauty; when the whole visible world seems to us an appointed abiding-place for truth and gentleness; and it is with hard reluctance we believe that tyranny, and woe, and wickedness exist within it. One of the happy hours that, sweet in the present, are yet more delicious in the past; treasured as they are, as somewhat akin to the hours of the world’s youth, when the earth was trod by angels.

The broad, fat fields of Kent lay smiling in the sun; the trim_hedges, clothed in tender green; the

budding oaks, the guardian giants of the soil; the wayside cottage, with garden-strip brimming with flowers; all things wore a look of peace and promise. A young gentleman, soberly habited, and well mounted, rode leisurely along; but, however beautiful the scene around him, it was plain, from the brooding, melancholy expression of his features, that he had no sympathy with the quietude and sweetness of external nature; but was self-concentrated, buried in deep thought. The loosened rein lay on his horse's neck, and the rider, apparently unconscious of all around him, was borne listlessly along, until the road opened into a patch of moor-land, when a second horseman, at a sharp trot, overtook the idle rider.

"A fine night, Sir, for a lazy man," said the stranger, in a loud and somewhat familiar tone.

"And why," answered the young gentleman, in a peculiarly soft and gentle voice, "why, Sir, for a lazy man?"

"Oh! I mean there's a sort of dreaminess in the air — a kind of sleepiness, if I may say it, about the night, that, to folks who love to creep about the world with folded arms and half-shut eyes, is the very time for 'em. You know, Sir, there are such people," said the man, with a laugh.

"Possibly," replied the younger horseman; who then, with a reserved and dignified motion, urged his steed, as though desirous to quit himself of his new companion. The stranger, however, was not a man to be bowed or looked away. Affecting not to perceive the intention of the youth, he mended his pace, and, quite at his ease, resumed the conversation.

"You are well mounted, Sir," he said, casting a

learned look at his companion's horse. "Strong, yet lightly built: I doubt not on pressing service, now, she'd carry double — I mean," added the stranger, with an odd, familiar glance, "I mean with a pillion."

"I can't say," was the calm, cold answer; but the stranger heeded not the rebuff.

"Oh, yes!" he cried; "I would I might have the richest heiress for the carrying her on such horse-flesh: did she weigh twenty thousand weight, your mare would do it. An heiress, or a fair lady who'd slip her white wrists from a chain that galled her." The young man looked suddenly in the speaker's face, as though to detect some meaning there revealed; but, careless and unabashed, and as though idly giving utterance to idle thoughts, the stranger continued. "There are such poor pining things, Sir, if a true knight knew where to find 'em: there are distressed ladies, who, I doubt it not, would trust themselves to the back of your mare, even though, like the flying horse I've read of, she took 'em to the moon. To be sure," said the stranger, with a slight chuckle, "the moon, for what I know, would be the fittest place for 'em. That's a strange nook, Sir, isn't it?" and the man pointed to a small, oddly-fashioned house, almost buried among high and gloomy trees, about a bow-shot from the road. "A queer place, and a queer master, if all be true of him." At these words, the young man, with a confused look, stooped to pat his horse's neck, saying the meanwhile, "Indeed? — and what is known of the master?"

"Why, there are twenty stories about him; but of course some of 'em can't be true. However, what's

known for fact is, he's rich as the Indies, and, moreover, he's got a young wife."

"Is that all?" asked the young man, with affected carelessness. "Is it so rare a matter that a rich old man should buy himself a young helpmate?"

"Humph! Helpmate's a pretty word, Sir; a mighty pretty word; but the help that three-score gets from three-and-twenty, eh? No, Sir; money in this marketing world of ours may buy much, but — flighty and frivolous and butterfly-like as the things sometimes are — it can't always buy a woman's heart. However, this it *can* purchase; it can buy a cage to put the poor thing in; it can buy eyes to watch her; hands to guard her; and so, old Snipeton may keep his pet-lamb safe from London wolves — safe as his parchments in his strong-box."

"You seem, Sir," said the young man, with animated looks, "you seem to know Mr. Snipeton."

"Why, Sir," answered the stranger, "I'm of London training, London habits; have, in my day — indeed who has not? — wanted a few hundreds; and is not Snipeton a man of benevolence — a man of profound heart and deepest money-chest? Is he not ever ready to assist his fellow-creatures at anything above sixty per cent.? Oh, you *must* know Snipeton," said the stranger, with a familiar laugh. "Yes, yes; you *must* know him."

"From what circumstance do you gather such belief?" asked the young man, a little haughtily.

"Why, you live a London life — oh, yes, Sir, there's no country, hawthorn-look about you — you have London wants, and such things will happen to the richest, the lordliest of us; at times the dice *will* go

wrong — the devil *will* shuffle the cards — and then, our honour — yes, that's the fiend's name — our honour, willy-nilly, sends us to some such good man as Ebenezer Snipeton. Why, he's as well known to the bloods of London as Bridewell's known to the 'prentices."

"And pray, Sir," asked the young man, with some effort at carelessness, "pray, do you know the victim — I mean, the usurer's wife?"

"I can't say that," answered the stranger. "And yet, I've seen her before she wore chains; seen her when she lived with the old man, her father. Ha, Sir! that was a bitter business."

"Pray, tell me," said the young man. "I know not wherefore I should care about it, and yet there is an interest in what you say that — I pray, tell me, Sir."

"You see, her father was a worn-out, broken merchant. His wife, as I have heard, went wrong, and from that time his head failed him — he grew wild and reckless — losses came thick as hail upon him, and then Snipeton came to his assistance — yes, assistance is what he called it — and bound him round and round with bills and bonds, I know not what, and made him all his own. Well, in good time, old Snipeton looked upon the girl — it isn't a new story though a sad and wicked one — and she became the usurer's wife, to save her father from the usurer's fangs. Pity is it that she did so; for the old man died only a few weeks after the wedding that made his child — kind, affectionate thing! — a slave for life. 'T would be a pretty world, Sir, wouldn't it, but for tricks like these, — and they, somehow, take

the bloom off it, don't they? Eh, Sir? Good night, Sir;" and then the stranger suddenly clapped spurs to his horse, and galloped onward. Following a bend of the road, he was in a few minutes out of sight; upon which our solitary traveller, evidently relieved of an irksome companion, turned his steed, and slowly retraced his way. He again relapsed into thought — again suffered his horse to wander at its own will onward. Thus absorbed he had proceeded a short distance when his eye fell upon a miserable man, seated on a mile-stone. He was in rags and almost bare-foot, and there was the sharp spirit of want in his features, that told a tale of many sufferings. He spoke not — made no gesture of supplication — but looked with idle, glazing eye upon the earth. This object of desolation — this poor tatterdemalion wretch — suddenly smote our traveller into consciousness; and with a kind compassionate voice, he accosted him. "My poor fellow, you seem in no plight for travel."

"Bad enough, Sir," said the man, "bad enough; yet hardly as bad as I wish it was."

"Indeed! A strange wish! Why, I take it, human strength could scarcely bear a heavier load of wretchedness."

"I wish it couldn't bear it," said the man; "I'm tired of it — heart-tired, and could lay down my life as willingly as a pack."

"Where do you come from?" asked the stranger.

"Oh! Sir! a long way from here — a long way; and why I came I know not: I was a restless fool, and might have died where I was."

"And where are your friends?" questioned the traveller.

"God only knows," said the man, with a heavy groan; "I don't."

"Poor fellow! but hope for better times," said the traveller; and at the same moment, throwing him a crown-piece, the youth rode briskly on.

And thus unknown to one another did St. Giles and St. James again meet. Again was St. Giles an outcast, hiding from the law; for he had escaped from his far-off place of bondage, and yearning for England, for the lovely land in which he had no rightful foot-step, in whose abounding wealth he had not the interest of a farthing, he had dared death and peril in many shapes, and hunger and all variety of misery, to stand once more upon his native soil. He knew that, if discovered, the hangman would claim him as lawful prey; he knew that he must hide and slink through life in the mere hope of holding life's poor mockery; and yet, he had slipped his chains, had suffered the misery of a thousand deaths, that he might once again behold an English sky, once again tread English earth! Poor wretch! how soon did hard reality disenchant him. How few the days he had passed in England, yet how many the terrors that had encompassed him! The land that in his dreams of bondage had seemed to him a Paradise; the very men who in his hopeful visions had promised gentleness and protection; all was changed. The earth, lovely and fruitful to happy eyes, to him seemed cursed; and all men, to his thought, looked at him with denouncing looks. With a crushed heart, and in the very recklessness of despair, he would again have welcomed

the chains he had broken. Again and again too, could he have stretched himself upon the earth as upon a bed, and rendered up his tired and hopeless spirit to his God. And then fierce thoughts of vengeance on the world's injustice would possess him; then he would deem himself as one sent upon the earth, missioned for mischief; a mere wretch of prey, to live by wrong and violence. And thus, with the demon rising in his breast, was he brooding, when St. James accosted him. But when the young man, the child of fortune, soothed the poor outcast with gentle words and timely relief, the sullen, desperate wretch became on the instant penitent and softened; and his touched heart felt there was goodness still in man, and beauty in the world. The thoughts of life came back to him in healthful strength; for his jaded spirit had drunk at the fountain of hope. In the fervour of his gratitude, he felt not that, in a day or two at most, the sun might see the misery of the past hour again upon him. It was enough that he had the means of present comfort; that he could quench the fire of hunger; that he could rest his travel-worn body. With this glad assurance he cast about his thoughts for a place of refuge. He knew not the road; knew not what offered as he advanced; but he remembered that he had passed a house a little more than a mile back, and retracing his steps, he would there seek refuge for the night. Though his heart was lightened, he walked with difficulty, and the evening closed in rapidly about his path. It was a calm and beautiful night, and the clear moon rose like a spirit in heaven. Suddenly St. Giles was startled by the sound of horses' feet; in an instant the animal, bearing a rider whose outline was but for a mo-

ment visible, at its fullest speed passed him; a minute, and the sound of hoofs died in the distance. There was something strange in such haste; something that fell upon St. Giles with a sense of evil done. For a time he paused, asking counsel of himself; and then his sinking vitals, his worn and wearied body, claimed his instant exertion, and again he pressed onward. In half-an-hour he arrived at the wished-for house. Lights shone in the windows; there was dancing, and the voice of village harmony was loud within. Wherefore, then, did St. Giles pause at the very threshold? Wherefore, then, did his knees feel weak, and his very heart sink numbed and dead, as he saw the cheerful light, and heard human voices clamouring their happiness? Wherefore should he not join the merry-makers? Alas! was there not convict written in his haggard cheeks — felon branded on his brow? Would he not, with a howl of triumph, be set upon by his fellow-men, and, like a wild beast escaped from a cage, be carried back to jail. His brain swam with the thought, and he almost fell to the earth. "Why, what's the matter, mate?" said a countryman, noting St. Giles's hesitation. "Why don't thee step in? There be plenty of room, if thee have the cash, though it be crowded a plenty."

"Thank'ee; I was a going in," said St. Giles; and with sudden resolution he entered the house. Happily for him, he thought, the place was thronged. A village-ball was held up-stairs, and the house throbbed and rocked beneath the vigorous feet of the dancers.

The resources of the neighbourhood, however, had supplied one fiddle, and the musician, the village tailor, touched by Phœbus, generously accommodated

his instrument to the distant keys and many variations of the singers. Shortly after St. Giles entered, the ears of the company were engaged by the patriotic strains of the barber of the hamlet, who, with vigour and taste happily mingled, celebrated in good strong, homely verse the magnanimity, courage, and glory of the British Lion; an animal that has, in its day, had as many fine things written of it as an opera-singer. And as the barber sang, fifty throats joined in chorus, declaratory of the might of the aforesaid British Lion, and evidently claiming a sort of partnership in its greatness. For the time, the British Lion was to them a very intimate relation; and they celebrated its glories as though they had a family interest in them. And St. Giles himself — to his passing astonishment — piped the praises of the British Lion! The out-cast vagabond, with fear pulling at his heart, had slid among the company, trembling at every man's eye, as it fell upon him; but soon he had quaffed some ale, he had eaten invigorating bread and cheese, and his heart, suffused and warm, had cast away all coward thought, and in the fulness of its gratitude, in the very surprise of its happiness, had chirped aloud to the honour of the British Lion; albeit the said Lion, as a very prominent actor in the arms of England — as the typical defender of our hearths and homes, our dearest morals, and sometimes our dearer property — might very justifiably have required the returned convict for its dinner. In very truth, St. Giles was the lawful prey of the defrauded, cheated British Lion; and yet St. Giles, in the ignorance of his happiness, sang to the praises of the Lion as though the royal beast had been to him his best friend. But then St.

Giles sang as a patriot, though in his heart and soul he might feel no better than a felon. Wicked, hypocritic St. Giles! In all history, did ever man, in higher places, too, do the like?

It was well for St. Giles that he had fortified himself with a cup of ale, with a few mouthfuls of food, ere the maiden who attended to the wants of the visitors, asked him for the requiting coin. Otherwise St. Giles had felt somewhat abashed to display his wealth; the furniture of his pocket, and his outside chattels in no way harmonising together. The crown-piece would have confused St. Giles; as to eyes sharpened by money — and what a whetstone it is even to dullest vision! — he felt that he in no way looked like a man to be honestly possessed of so much wealth. Either he would have thought the lawful metal of the coin might be questioned; or that difficulty overcome, his rightful claim to it disputed. And then, had he out with the truth, who, he thought, in the narrowness of his heart, would believe him! What! anybody give a beggar a crown-piece? Then, at once, believe the moon coagulated cream, or any other household substance. But, happily, we say, for St. Giles, his heart was suddenly warmed; and, therefore, with a careless, happy air, never suspecting the suspicions of others, he laid his crown-piece in the hand of the attendant nymph, or if you will, bacchante; and she, with all the trustingness and simplicity of her sex, never looked at St. Giles and then at his money as though, it is sometimes done, comparing the face of flesh and the face of metal, to mark if they be worthy of each other; but instantly gave the change, with a blythe “thank’ee” for the patronage. Presumptuous

is man! St. Giles, who, five minutes before, felt himself wretched, terrified at the thought of singing in the tap-room of the Lamb and Star, was now made so bold by his happiness, that, his eyes meeting the bright orbs of Becky, full and swimming as they were with satisfaction, and her little plump anatomy swaying to and fro, in kindly sympathy with the dancers up-stairs — St. Giles, we say, in the hardihood of his sudden confidence, laughed and chucked Becky under the chin. And Becky, looking not more than decently ferocious, bounced lightly round, cried “Well, I’m sure!” and then, as if nothing had happened, attended the call of another customer.

And could St. Giles so soon forget that he was a returned convict, as with slight provocation to chuck the maiden of the Lamb and Star under the chin? But such is the heart of man!

When the clamour of the room was at its highest, a young man sparkishly drest suddenly looked in, and was as suddenly greeted by the merry-makers. A loud cheer for “Master Willis” shook the roof-tree. The new-comer was a man of about five-and twenty; of tall and well-knit frame, with large, fresh-coloured features, and a profusion of black hair; the very man to kill village hearts by dozens. He seemed in the highest spirits; indeed, almost unnaturally gay. There was something in his laboured vivacity that might have awakened the attention of a less merry audience; a hollowness in his loud, roaring laugh, that hardly seemed of mirth. But Master Willis was among friends, admirers: he was the favourite of the men, the admired of the women; besides, he rarely failed, on occasions such as the present, to play the patron. Hence, after

a few moments, in which his hand was grasped by at least twenty humble acquaintances, he gave an order that "ale was to be served all round." This largess was greeted with new acclamation. When it had subsided, Master Willis, with a significant killing look, bade all his friends be happy together; but that for himself, why he must join the girls, and have a dance up-stairs. This gallantry was met with another burst of applause, in the midst of which Master Willis, all smiles and happiness, disappeared.

"And who is that gentleman?" St. Giles ventured to ask of the barber, at the time his nearest neighbour.

"Who *is* he? Well, where did you come from? Not know him? Where was you born?" cried the barber.

"I'm — I'm a stranger hereabouts," answered St. Giles, a little vexed with himself for his untimely curiosity.

"So I should think, not to know Master Willis. A stranger! Why I should take you for a Frenchman, or an outlandish foreigner of some sort, never to have heard of him. The best hand at bowls and single-stick — the best hunter — the best shot — the best everything. Well, you do look like a foreigner," said the barber, glancing at St. Giles in a way that made him heart-sick.

"I'm a true Englishman," said St. Giles, "though I've been some years out of the country."

"Ha! serving your king, and all that?" said the barber. St. Giles nodded. "Well, like a good many of the sort, you don't seem to have made your fortin

by it. But then, I suppose, you've got a lot of glory? Now, within a dozen or two, can you tell us how many Frenchmen you've killed?" St. Giles winced from the small grey eyes of the barber, who, as though conscious of the confusion he created, pursued his queries with growing self-satisfaction. "You can't tell us how many, eh? A precious lot I should think, by the look of you. Well, if all over you don't smell of gunpowder!" and the barber affectedly held his nostrils, to give, as he conceived, point to his wit. St. Giles felt his patience fast departing: he therefore opened his hands, and fixing his eye upon the barber, again leisurely doubled his fist. The look, the gesture, was instantly understood by the wag, for immediately dropping his tone of banter, he became most courteously communicative. "But you was asking about Master Willis? To be sure — as a stranger, it's natural you shouldn't know. Well, his uncle's the richest farmer a hundred miles about. His land's as fat as butter, and Master Bob — we call him Bob here — will have every inch of it. He's a wild fellow, to be sure. Doesn't mind, when the temper's on him, knocking down a man like a bullock; but bless you! no harm in him — not a bit of harm. My service to you," and quaffing the ale — Master Willis's liberal gift — the barber moved away.

The time wore on, and St. Giles, exhausted by fatigue, made drowsy with his entertainment, dared to think of bed. Yes, he had the hardihood to promise himself that night at least, the shelter of a roof. "My good girl," said he, in a confidential whisper to Becky, "can I sleep anywhere here to-night — anywhere, you know?"

"Why, you see," answered Becky, her eyes instinctively wandering from rag to rag, as worn by St. Giles, "why, you see, the missus is very partic'lar." And then Becky, despite of her, looked dubiously at the toes of St. Giles, indecorously showing their destitution to the world. Having, quite unconsciously, counted the said toes, and assured herself there were ten of them, all in flagrant want of shoe-leather, Becky repeated, with even more emphasis — "Very partic'lar."

"I dare say — she's right, in course," answered St. Giles; "but I don't want nothing for nothing — I can pay for it."

"Oh, to be sure," said Becky quickly, "it isn't money; oh no, that's nothing — but it's the character of the house we stand upon. Missus says that houses are like Christians, and catches bad characters all the same as you catch the small-pox or anything of the sort from them as have 'em. That's what she says, and I dare say it's all true."

St. Giles made no answer; but a deep, heart-drawn sigh broke from him. Becky was turning away, when, touched by the sound, she suddenly looked in St. Giles's face — it was on the instant so blankly wretched — so old, so hopeless in its look — the forced smile that had played about it had so quickly vanished, that, unknown to herself, with a feeling of compassion and sympathy, the poor girl caught St. Giles's hand, and with altered voice said — "I don't think missus has seen you, and as we're so busy to-night, she mayn't want to look at you; so be quiet a little while, and I dare say I can get you some nice straw in the barn."

"Thank'ee," said St. Giles — "Do, God bless you;" and he pressed the girl's hand, and her simple, kindly heart was melted by the poor fellow's wretchedness, and with twinkling eyes and a smile on her coarse, broad, honest face, she left the room. In a few minutes the door was opened, and Becky with upraised finger stood without. St. Giles immediately obeyed the signal, and in brief time found himself on his way to bed, preceded by Becky with a lanthorn; for the moon had gone down, and the night was pitchy dark. "I've brought the light," said she, "for fear of the dog. He killed one man, or as good as killed him, for he never got over it; but he won't bite nobody when he sees 'em with me." And the conduct of the dog speedily bore out the character given him; for though with grinning teeth, and a low, snuffling howl, he walked round and round St. Giles, Becky — even as Una dominated the lion — held Dragon in completest subjection. Although she called him a brute, a beast, a nasty creature, and twenty other names of the like prettiness, Dragon with a patient wagging of the tail bore them all, his very patience — what a lesson for human philosophy! — turning invective into compliment. "Here it is," said Becky, opening the barn-door. "Here's straw as sweet as any clover; and there isn't many rats, for they was hunted only a month ago. You're not afeard of rats? Bless you, they're more afeard of Christians than Christians should be afeard of them; and so I tells missus; but for all that she will squeal at 'em. Well, people can't help what they call 'tipathies. As for me, I minds rats no more than rabbits. There, now, up in that corner; and if there

isn't a sack and all to cover you! Why, you couldn't sleep better if you was a lord. And see here. Here's a bottle with some beer, and some bread and cheese, when you wake in the morning. I'm always hungry when I wake in the morning, I am; no matter what time I goes to bed: but that comes, as I say, of having a clear conscience, and doing no harm to nobody. There, good night — poor soul! God be with you!" And with this simple, earnest wish — this little wish that like the circle of the universe holds within it all things — did the kind, the gentle drudge of a way-side pot-house send the convict to his bed. No king was ever shown to tapestried chamber with truer wishes for his rest, than went with St. Giles to his straw. "God be with you," said the girl; and the words of gentleness, the happy, hopeful tone that breathed in them, fell like balm upon the felon's heart; and in a few moments he was sunk in the deep happiness of sleep; he was far away in that neutral region of life, where emperors put off their crowns — where the arrogance of earth is calm and harmless — where pride and ostentation have not their blatant trumpets blown before them — where the purple of Dives is cast aside on the same heap with the rags of Lazarus — where the equality to all, that death shall everlastingly bring, is once a day rehearsed by all men — where life is simple breathing, and the slave loses the master.

For many nights had St. Giles slept in the open fields. Ragged, and worn, and hunger-stricken, he had nevertheless slept; and only when the daylight came felt for a time his sinews cramped and stiffened with the dews of night. Still, with the sky above him,

no more sheltered than his neighbour ox or sheep, he had slept; he had, despite of fortune, cheated misery with forgetfulness. Nature for a time had blessed him as she had blessed the happiest man. Yet sleep had come to him slowly, reluctantly; bodily want and suffering would for a time refuse the sweet oblivion. But here in a barn — with fresh, delicious, odorous straw; with roof and walls to hold out wind and rain — St. Giles composed himself to sleep as almost to eternal rest. He was happy, profoundly happy that he was lodged, comfortably, as any beast.

For an hour — yes, an hour at least — had St. Giles enjoyed the happiness of rest, when he was loudly, roughly awakened. "Hallo! you vagabond — get up, and answer for a murder," bawled a voice, and St. Giles, leaping to his feet, saw the barn half-filled with people, armed with sticks and weapons as for some sudden fray.

CHAPTER XII.

"WHAT'S the matter now?" cried St. Giles, pale and aghast; for instantly he believed himself detected; instantly saw the gaol, the gallows, and the hangman. "What's the matter?" he cried, trembling from head to foot.

"What's the matter?" roared the barber, "only a little bit of murder, that's all — and that's nothing to chaps like you."

Terrible as was the charge, nevertheless St. Giles felt himself somewhat relieved: he was not, he found, apprehended as the escaped convict; that was yet unknown; and, oddly enough, with the accusation of bloodshed on him, he felt comparatively tranquil.

"Murder, is it," he said, "well, who's murdered? And whoever he is, why is it to be me who's killed him — tell me that?"

"Did you ever hear?" said the barber. "A chap, with rags on him, not fit to scare birds in a bean-field, and yet talks like one of us! I should like to know where such as you get crown pieces?"

"Never mind — never mind," said the host of the Lamb and Star, "that's justice's work — not ours."

"Justice's work!" exclaimed the hostess, now pressing foremost of the crowd — "and what will justice do for us? When justice has hanged the ragamuffin, will justice give back the character of the house? Who'll come to the Lamb and Star, when it's known

to harbour cut-throats? But it's that hussy, Becky; it's she that hid the murderer here; it's she, I'll be sworn it, knows all about the murder, for there isn't such a devil for breaking in the whole county." Such was the emphatic declaration of the hostess, who, by a kind of logic — not altogether uncommon to the sex — saw in Becky, the reckless destroyer of pottery, the consequent accomplice in human destruction. The reasoning, it must be confessed, was of the most violent, the most tyrannic kind; on which account, it was somewhat more attractive to Mrs. Blink; guileless, ingenuous soul! who, in her innocence, rated her handmaiden for bestowing a homicide in the barn of the Lamb and Star; when, had the matron known aught of the moral machinery of life, she ought instantly to have doubled Becky's wages for such inestimable service. Mrs. Blink ought to have known that to a public-house a murderer was far more profitable, to both tap and parlour, than a pretty barmaid. She ought to have looked upon the Lamb and Star as a made hostelry, from the instant it should be known that St. Giles, with the mark of Cain fresh upon him, changed his first blood-begotten dollar there; that afterwards he sought the sweets of sleep in the Lamb and Star's barn. Silly Mrs. Blink! Why, the very straw pressed by St. Giles was precious as though laid upon by Midas: to be split and worked into bonnets it was worth — what brain shall say how much a truss? But Mrs. Blink thought not after this fashion. She looked upon St. Giles as though he had brought so much blood upon the house — so many ineffaceable stains of shame and ignominy. Foolish woman! she ought rather to have made him her humblest curtsy;

ought rather to have set her face with her sunniest smile, for having given the Lamb and Star the preference of his infamy. Benighted creature! she knew not the worth of a murder to a bar.

"And pray who is murdered?" again asked St. Giles, with an effrontery that again called up all the virtuous astonishment of the host and hostess. "If I've killed any body, can't you let me know who it is!"

"Yes, yes," cried the landlord, "you're just the fellow to brazen it out; but it won't do this time;" and he then looked knowingly at his wife, who was about to express herself on the certainty of St. Giles's fate, when she beheld Becky peeping anxiously from the crowd, most shamefully interested, as Mrs. Blink conceived, in the prisoner's condition. "Why, you wicked hussy! if you oughtn't to be hanged with him," cried the hostess: whereupon Becky immediately took to her heels, and was immediately followed by her mistress, whose loud indignation at length died a muttering death in the distance. Mrs. Blink being gone, there was dead silence for a moment; and then the landlord, with a puzzled look, jerking his head towards St. Giles, briefly asked counsel of one and all. "What shall we do with him?"

This query produced another pause. Every man seemed to feel as though the question was specially put to himself, and therefore did his best to prepare to answer it. Yes; almost every man scratched his head, and suddenly tried to look acute, sharp. "What's to be done wi 'un?" asked two or three musingly; and then looked in each other's faces, as though they looked at a dead wall. At length, wisdom descended upon the brain of the barber. "I'll tell you what we'll do

with him," said the small oracle of the Lamb and Star, and suddenly all looked satisfied, as though the mystery was at length discovered, — "I'll tell you what we'll do with him: we'll leave him where he is." Everybody nodded assent to the happy thought. "He'll be just as safe here as in the cage, and that's a mile away. We've only got to tie him hand and foot, and three or four of us to sit up and watch him, and I warrant he doesn't slip through our fingers — I warrant me, varmint as he is, we'll give a good account of him to justice." The barber was rewarded with a murmur of applause; and such approbation he received all tranquilly, like a man accustomed to the sweets of moral incense. For St. Giles, he had again cast himself hopelessly upon the straw; again lay, seemingly indifferent to all around him. In the despair, the wretchedness of his condition, life or death was, he thought, to him alike. On all hands he was a hunted, persecuted wretch; life was to him a miserable disease; a leprosy of soul that made him alone in a breathing world. There might be companionship in the grave. And so dreaming, St. Giles lay dumb and motionless as a corpse, the while his captors took counsel for his security. "Hush!" said the barber, motioning silence, and then having stood a few moments, listening, with upraised finger, he cried — "it's my belief the rogue's asleep; in that case, we needn't tie him; we've only to watch outside: the night's warm, the dog's loose, and with a mug or so of ale, I'm good to watch with any half-dozen of you." The truth is, the barber had been visited by a second thought that suggested to him the probability of rough usage at the hands of the prisoner, should there be an attempt

to put him in bonds, and he therefore, with a pardonable regard for his own features, proposed to waive the ceremony of tying the culprit. "He'll have his share of rope in time," said the barber, much satisfied with the smallness of the jest. And thereupon, he beckoned his companions from the barn; and had already imagined the balminess of the coming ale — for the landlord had promised flowing mugs — when justice, professional justice, arrived in the shape of a sworn constable. "Where's this murdering chap?" asked the functionary.

"All right, Master Tipps," said the barber, "all snug; we've got him."

"There's nothing right, nothing snug, without the cuffs," said the constable, displaying the irons with much official pride. — "He's in the barn, there, eh, Master Blink?" Then I charge you all in the king's name — and this is his staff — to help me." The landlord, touched by the magic of the adjuration, stepped forward with the lantern; the constable followed, and was sulkily followed by two or three of the party. The barber, however, and one or two of his kidney, budged not a foot. "Isn't it always so?" he exclaimed, "if ever a man puts himself out of the way, and ventures his precious life and limbs, taking up all sorts of varmint — if ever he does it, why it's safe for Master Constable to come down, and take away all the honour and glory. I should like to know what's the use of a man feeling savage against rogues, if another man's to have the credit of it? Now you'll see how it will be, it's the way of the world, oh yes! you'll see. They'll take this chap, and try him, and hang him, perhaps put him in chains and all, and we shall never

be so much as thanked for it. No, we shall never be named in the matter. Well, after this, folks may murder who they like for me. And isn't it precious late, too! and will my wife believe I've been nowhere but here?" cried the barber; and a sudden cloud darkened his face, and he ran off like a late schoolboy to his task. Poor St. Giles! he knew it not; but, if vengeance were sweet to think upon, there was somebody at home who would revenge the wrongs of the vagrant upon the barber. Somebody, who, at deep midnight, would scare sleep from his pillow, even whilst the feloniously accused snored among the straw. And after this fashion may many a wretch take sweet comfort; — if, indeed, revenge be sweet; and there are very respectable folks to whom, in truth, it has very saccharine qualities, for they seem to enjoy it as children enjoy sugar-cane; — sweet comfort that, whatever wrong or contumely may be cast upon him in the light of day, there may be somebody, as it would seem especially appointed, to chastise the evil-doer; and that, too, "in the dead waste and middle of the night;" to drive sleep from his eyeballs; to make him feel a coward, a nobody, a nincompoop, in his own holland.

Pleasant is it for the sour-thinking man who sees a blustering authority — whether grasping a beadle's staff or holding the scales of justice — sometimes to know that there is a louder authority at home, a greater vehemence of reproof, that may make the bully of the day the sleepless culprit of the night.. Was there not Whitlow, beadle of the parish of St. Scraggs? What a man-beast was Whitlow! How would he, like an avenging ogre, scatter apple-women! How would

he foot little boys, guilty of peg-tops and marbles! How would he puff at a beggar — puff like the picture of the north-wind in the spelling-book! What a huge, heavy, purple face he had, as though all the blood of his body was stagnant in his cheeks! And then, when he spoke, would he not growl and snuffle like a dog? How the parish would have hated him, but that the parish heard there was a Mrs. Whitlow; a small fragile woman, with a face sharp as a pen-knife, and lips that cut her words like scissors! And what a forlorn wretch was Whitlow, with his head brought once a night to the pillow! Poor creature! helpless, confused; a huge imbecility, a stranded whale! Mrs. Whitlow talked and talked; and there was not an apple-woman but in Whitlow's sufferings was not avenged; not a beggar, that thinking of the beadle at midnight, might not, in his compassion, have forgiven the beadle of the day. And in this punishment we acknowledge a grand, a beautiful retribution. A Judge Jefferys in his wig is an abominable tyrant; yet may his victims sometimes smile to think what Judge Jefferys suffers in his night-cap!

And now leave we for awhile St. Giles in the official custody of Tipps, who, proud of his handcuffs as a chamberlain of his wand, suffered not the least opportunity to pass without resorting to them. To him, handcuffs were the grace of life, the only security of our social condition. Man, without the knowledge of handcuffs, would to Tipps have been a naked wretch, indeed; a poor barbarian, needing the first glimmer of civilisation. Had philosophy talked to Tipps of the golden chain of necessity, to the sense of Tipps the chain would have been made of handcuffs. Hence

the constable had thought it his prime duty to handcuff St. Giles; and then, he suffered himself to be persuaded to leave the murderer in his straw; the landlord handsomely promising the loan of a cart to remove the prisoner in the morning.

Some two miles distant from the Lamb and Star, where the road turned with a sharp angle, there was a deep hollow; this place had been known, it may be to the Druids, as the Devil's Elbow. Throughout the world, man has ungraciously given sundry ugly spots of the earth's face — its warts and pock-marks — to the fiend; and the liberal dwellers of Kent had, as we say, made over an abrupt break-neck corner of earth to the Devil for his Elbow. It was at this spot that, whilst St. Giles was swallowing ale at the Lamb and Star, his supposed victim, the handsome, generous St. James was discovered prostrate, stunned, and wounded. Rumour had, of course, taken his life; making with easiest despatch St. Giles a murderer; for being an outcast and a beggar, how facile was the transformation! But St. James was not dead; albeit a deep wound, as from some mortal instrument, some dull weapon, as the law has it, on his temple, looked more than large enough for life to escape from. Happily for St. James, there were men in Kent who lived not a life of reverence for the law; otherwise, it is more than probable that, undiscovered until the morning, the Devil's Elbow might have been haunted by another ghost. But it was to be otherwise. It was provided by fate that there should be half-a-dozen smugglers, bound on an unhallowed mission to the coast; who, first observing St. James's horse, masterless and quietly grazing at the road's side, made closer

search and thence discovered young St. James, as they at first believed, killed, and lying half-way down the hollow. "Here's been rough work," cried one of the men; "see, the old, wicked story — blood flowing, and pockets inside out. He's a fine lad; too fine for such a death." "All's one for that," said a second, "we can't bring him to life by staring at him: we've queer work enough of our own on hand — every one for his own business. Come along." "He's alive!" exclaimed a third, with an oath; and as he spoke, St. James drew a long, deep sigh. "All the better for him," cried the second, "then he can take care of himself." "Why, Jack Bilson, you'd never be such a hard-hearted chap as to leave anything with life in it, in this fashion?" was the remonstrance of the first discoverer of St. James; whereupon Mr. Bilson, with a worldliness of prudence, sometimes worth uncounted gold to the possessor, remarked that humanity was very well — but that everybody was made for everybody's self — and that while they were palavering there over nobody knew who, they might lose the running of the tubs. Humanity, as Mr. Bilson said, was very well; but then there was a breeches-pocket virtue in smuggled Schiedam. "Well, if I was to leave a fellow-cretur in this plight, I should never have the impudence to hope to have a bit of luck again," said the more compassionate contrabandist, whose nice superstition came in aid of his benevolence; "and so I say, mates, let us carry him to that house yonder, make 'em take him in, and then go with light hearts and clean consciences upon our business." "Yes; if we ain't all taken up for robbers and murderers for our pains: but, Ben Magsby, you always was a ob-

stinate grampus." And Ben Magsby carried out his humane purpose; for St. James was immediately borne to the house aforesaid. Loud and long was the knocking at the door, ere it was opened. At length, a little sharp-faced old woman appeared, and, with wonderful serenity, begged to know what was the matter. "Why, here's a gentleman," said Magsby, "who's been altogether robbed and well-nigh murdered."

"Robbed and murdered!" said the matron, calmly as though she spoke of a pie over-baked, or a joint over-roasted, — "robbed and murdered! What's that to us? The public-house is the place for such things. Go to the Lamb and Star." But the woman spoke to heedless ears; for Ben Magsby and his mates — ere the woman had ceased her counsel — had borne the wounded man across the threshold, and unceremoniously entering the first discoverable apartment, had laid him on a couch.

"There," said Ben, returning with his companions to the door, "there, we've done our duty as Christians, mind you do yours." And with this admonition, the smugglers vanished.

It was then that the little old woman showed signs of emotion. Murder and robbery at the public-house she could have contemplated with becoming composure; but to be under the same roof with the horror was not to be quietly endured so long as she had lungs; and so thinking, she stood in the hall, and vehemently screamed. Like boatswain's whistle did that feminine summons pierce every corner of the mansion: the cupboard mouse paused over stolen cheese — the hearth-cricket suddenly was dumb — the deathwatch

in the wall ceased its amorous tick-tick — so sudden, sharp, and all-pervading was that old woman's scream. "Why, Dorothy! is that you?" exclaimed a matronly gentlewoman, hastening down stairs, and followed by a young lady of apparently some three or four and twenty. "Is it possible? Why, what's the matter?"

"Nothing at all, Ma'am — nothing," said Dorothy, suddenly relapsing into her customary apathy; for, sooth to say, she was a sort of vegetable woman; a drowsy, dreamy person, whose performance of such a scream was considered by its hearers as a most wondrous manifestation of power. Nobody, to have looked at Dorothy Vale, would have thought that within her dwelt such a scream *in posse*; but, sometimes, great is the mystery of little old women. "Nothing at all, Ma'am — that is, don't be frightened — that is, they say, Ma'am, murder and robbery."

"Heavens! Where — where?" exclaimed the young lady.

"It isn't your dear husband, Ma'am — oh no, it isn't master, so don't be frightened," said the tranquil Dorothy. "But, if you please, Ma'am, it's in that room — I mean the body, Ma'am."

The young lady, for a moment, shrank back in terror; and then, as though reproving herself for the weakness, she rapidly passed into the room, followed by her elder companion. At the same instant, the wounded man had half risen from the couch, and was looking wanderingly around him — "Clarissa! Can it be?" he cried, and again swooning, fell back. Instantly, the girl was on her knees at his side; uncon-

scious of the reproving, the astonished looks of the matron.

"He's dying — oh, Mrs. Wilton, he is dying! Murdered — I know it all — I see it all — and for me — wretch that I am — for me," and her form writhed with anguish, and she burst into an agony of tears.

"Oh, no — the hurt is not mortal; be assured, I am surgeon enough to know that; be assured of it, Mrs. Snipeton;" thus spoke Mrs. Wilton, in words of coldest comfort, and with a manner strangely frozen. "Dorothy, stay you with your mistress, whilst I send for assistance, and seek what remedies I can myself. I will return instantly: meanwhile, I say, remain with your mistress."

And St. James, unconscious of the hospitality, was the guest of Mr. Ebenezer Snipeton; whose character, the reader may remember, was somewhat abruptly discussed by the stranger horseman in the past chapter. It was here, at Dovesnest, that the thrifty money-seller kept his young wife close; far away, and safe, as he thought, from the bold compliments, the reckless gallantry of the rich young men who, in their frequent time of need, paid visits to the friend who, the security certain as the hour, never failed to assist them. Mr. Snipeton was not, in the ordinary matters of life, a man who underrated his own advantages, moral and physical. Sooth to say, he was, at times, not unapt to set what detraction might have thought an interested value on them. And yet, what a touchstone for true humility in man is woman; Ebenezer Snipeton, in all worldly dealings, held himself a match for any of the money-coining

sons of Adam. He could fence with a guinea — and sure we are guinea-fencing is a far more delicate art, is an exercise demanding a finer touch, a readier sleight, than the mere twisting of steel foils; — he could fence, nay, with even the smallest current coin of the realm, and — no matter who stood against him — come off conqueror. “Gold,” says Shelley, “is the old man’s sword.” And most wickedly at times, will hoary-bearded men, with blood as cold and thin as water in their veins, hack and slash with it! They know — the grim, palsied warriors! — how the weapon will cut heart-strings; they know what wounds it will inflict; but then, the wounds bleed inwardly: there is no outward and visible hurt to call for the coroner; and so the victim may die, and show, as gossips have it, a very handsome corpse, whilst homicidal avarice, with no drop of outward gore upon his hands — no damning spots seen by the world’s naked eye — mixes in the world, a very respectable old gentleman; a man who has a file of receipts to show for everything; a man who never did owe a shilling; and above all, a man who takes all the good he gets as nothing more than a proper payment for his exceeding respectability. He is a pattern man; and for such men heaven rains manna; only in these days the shower comes down in gold.

Ebenezer Snipeton, we say, had a high, and therefore marketable opinion of himself; for the larger the man’s self-esteem the surer is he of putting it off in the world’s mart. The small dealer in conceit may wait from the opening to the closing of the market, and not a soul shall carry away his little pennyworth; now the large holder is certain of a

quick demand for all his stock. Men are taken by its extent, and close with him immediately. If, reader, you wanted to buy one single egg, would you purchase that one egg of the poor, rascal dealer, who had only one egg to sell? Answer us, truly. Behold the modest tradesman. He stands shrinkingly, with one leg drawn up, and his ten fingers interlaced lackadaisically, the while his soul, in its more than maiden bashfulness, would retreat, get away, escape anyhow from its consciousness. And so he stands, all but hopeless behind his one egg. He feels a blush crawl over his face — for there are blushes that do crawl — as you pass by him, for pass him you do. It is true you want but one egg; nevertheless, to bring only one egg to market shows a misery, a meanness in the man, that in the generous heat of your heart's-blood, you most manfully despise. And, therefore, you straddle on to the tradesman who stands behind a little mountain of eggs; and timidly asking for one — it is so very poor, so wretched a bit of huckstering, you are ashamed to be seen at it — you take the first egg offered you, and humbly laying down your halfpenny farthing, vanish straight away! As it is with eggs, so, in the world-market, is it with human pretensions. The man with a small, single conceit is shunned, a silly, miserable fellow; but the brave, wholesale-dealer, the man of a thousand pretensions, is beset by buyers. Now, Ebenezer was one of your merchants of ten thousand eggs — and though to others they had proved addled, they had nevertheless been gold to him. And yet, did Ebenezer's wife — his ripe, red-lipped spouse of two-and-twenty — somehow touch her husband with a strange, a painful humility. He

had sixty iron winters — and every one of them plain as an iron-bar — in his face. Time had used his visage as Robinson Crusoe used his wooden calendar, notching every day in it. And what was worse, though Time had kept an honest account — and what, indeed, so honest, so terribly honest as Time? — nevertheless, he had so marked the countenance — (it is a shabby, shameful trick Time has with some faces) — that every mark to the thoughtless eye counted well-nigh double. And Snipeton knew this. He knew, too, that upon his nose — half-way, like sentinel on the middle of a bridge — there was a wart very much bigger than a pea, with bristles, sticking like black pins in it. Now, this wart Ebenezer in his bachelor days had thought of like a philosopher; that is, he had never thought about it. Nay, his honeymoon had almost waned into the cold, real moon that was ever after to blink upon his marriage life, ere Ebenezer thought of his wrinkled, pouch-like cheeks; of his more terrible wart. And then did every bristle burn in it, as though it was turned to red-hot wire: then was he plagued, tormented by the thought of the wart, as by some avenging imp. He seemed to have become all wart: to be one unsightly excrescence. The pauper world envied the happiness of Ebenezer Snipeton: with such wealth, with such a wife, oh, what a blessed man! But the world knew not the torments of the wart! And wherefore was Ebenezer thus suddenly mortified? We have said, he had taken a wife as young, and fresh, and beautiful as spring. And therefore, after a short season, was Ebenezer in misery. He looked at his wife's beauty, and then he thought of his withered face — that felon wart! In her very

loveliness — like a satyr drinking at a crystal fount — he saw his own deformity. Was it possible she could love him? The self-put question — and he could not but ask it, — with her, alone, in bed, at board — that tormenting question still would whisper, snake-voiced in his ear, could she love him? And his heart — his heart that heretofore had been cold and blooded like a fish — would shrink and tremble, and dare not answer. True it was, she was obedient; too obedient. She did his bidding promptly, humbly, as though he had bought her for his slave. And so, in truth, he had: and there had been a grave man of the church, grave witnesses, too, to bind the bargain. Verily, he had bought her; and on her small white finger — it was plain to all who saw her — she wore the manacle of her purchaser.

And Ebenezer, as his doubt grew stronger — as the memory of his outside ugliness became to him a daily spectre — resolved to hide this human ware, this pretty chattel of flesh and blood, far away in rustic scenes. And therefore bought he a secluded house, half-buried amid gloomy trees — cypress and dead man's yew — and this house, in the imp-like playfulness of his soul, he called Dovesnest. That it should be so very near the Devil's Elbow was of no matter to Ebenezer; nay, there was something quaint, odd, fantastic in the contrast; a grim humour that a little tickled him.

And thus, reader, have we at an important moment — if this small toy of a history may be allowed to have important moments — thus have we paused to sketch the owner of Dovesnest; to digress on his bachelor confidence, and his married modesty; to speak of his love, and of the demon ugliness — the wrinkles

and the ever-burning wart — that perplexed it. All this delay, we know, is a gross misdemeanour committed on the reader of romance; who, when two lovers meet in misery and peril, has all his heart and understanding for them alone; and cares not that the writer — their honoured parent, be it remembered — should walk out upon the foolscap, and without ever so much as asking permission, begin balancing some peacock's feather on his nose; talking the while of the deep Argus' eye — purple and green and gold, glowing at the end of it; if, indeed, it be an Argus' eye. For ourselves, we doubt the truth of the transformation. We see in the story nothing but a wicked parable, reflecting most ungraciously on the meekness and modesty of the last-made sex; the straitened rib. Juno, we are told, when she had killed Argus, took the poor fellow's eyes and fixed them for ever and for ever on her peacock's tail. Now, what is most unseemingly shadowed forth in this? Why, a most mean, pusillanimous insinuation that when a woman wears a most beautiful gown, she desires that the eyes of all the world may hang upon it. This we take to be the meaning of — but we are balancing the feather again: and here is poor St. James bleeding on the couch whilst — stony-hearted theorists that we are! — we are talking of peacocks.

Mrs. Snipeton — (such was the name which, among the other wrongs Ebenezer, the money merchant, had committed upon the young and beautiful creature who knelt at the side of St. James) — Mrs. Snipeton — no; it will not do. We will not meddle with the ugly gift of her husband: we will rather owe an obligation to her godfathers and godmothers.

Clarissa still knelt at the side of St. James; and even Mrs. Dorothy Vale marvelled at the whiteness of her mistress's cheeks — at the big tears that rolled from her upraised eyes — whilst her lips moved as though in passionate prayer. "God bless me!" said Mrs. Vale, "I don't think the young man's dead, but — oh, the goodness! what a pretty couch his wound will make! Ha! people have no thought, or they'd have taken him into the kitchen. He'll be worse than five pound to that couch if a groat. You can get out anything but blood," said Mrs. Vale. "If it had been wine, I shouldn't have minded it."

"He's dying! He's murdered — his blood is on my head!" cried Clarissa, as Mrs. Wilton returned to the room.

"Be tranquil; pray be calm," said Mrs. Wilton in a tone of something like command that, but for the misery of the moment, could not have escaped Clarissa; for Mrs. Wilton was only housekeeper at Dovesnest. "He will be well — quite well. I have despatched Nicholas for the surgeon; though I think I have skill sufficient to save the fee." And this she said in so hopeful a tone, that Clarissa languidly smiled at the encouragement. "You will leave the gentleman with me and Dorothy. We will sit up with him."

"No," said Clarissa, with a calm determination, seating herself near the wounded man. "No."

"Mrs. Snipeton!" cried the housekeeper in a tone of mixed remonstrance and reproach.

"My husband being absent, it is my duty — yes, my duty" — repeated Clarissa, "to attend to the hospitality of his house."

"Hospitality," repeated Mrs. Wilton; and her cold, yet anxious eye glanced at Clarissa, who, slightly

frowning, repelled the look. "As you will, Mrs. Snipeton — as you will, Mrs. Snipeton," and the housekeeper gave an emphasis to the conjugal name that made its bearer wince as at a sudden pain. "There is no danger now, I am sure," she continued; washing the wound, whilst the sufferer every moment breathed more freely. At length, consciousness returned. He knew the face that looked with such earnest pity on him.

"Clarissa — Clarissa!" cried St. James.

"Be silent — you must be silent," said Mrs. Wilton, with somewhat more than the authority of a nurse — "You must not speak — indeed, you must not — you are hurt, greatly hurt, — and for your own sake — for more than your own sake" — and the lips of the speaker trembled and grew pale — "yes, for more than your own sake, you must be silent."

"All will be well, Sir," said Clarissa; "trust me, you are in careful hands. The doctor will be here, and —"

"Nay, I need none, fair lady," answered St. James; "for I am already in careful hands. Indeed, I know it — feel it."

"Oh, you must be silent — indeed you must," urged Mrs. Wilton imperatively; and then she added in a voice of sorrow, and with a most troubled look, — "otherwise you know not the danger, the misery that may befall you. Mrs. Snipeton," and again she turned with anxious face towards Clarissa, "Dorothy and I can watch."

Clarissa made no answer; but gravely bowed her head. Mrs. Wilton, suppressing a sigh, spoke no further; but busied herself with her patient's wound, whilst Clarissa and St. James mutely interchanged looks that went to the heart of the saddened, the unheeded housekeeper.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE hall clock had struck five. The beauty of a spring morning was upon the earth. The sun shone into the sick man's room; green leaves rustled at his window; and a robin, perched on the topmost branch of a tall holly, sang a song of thankful gladness to the world. Clarissa, who had watched all night, walked in the garden. How fresh and full of hope was all around her; how the very heart of the earth seemed to beat with the new life of spring! And she, who was made to sympathise with all that was beautiful — she, who was formed to dwell on this earth as in a solemn place, seeing in even its meanest things adornments of a holy temple; vessels sacred to the service of glorifying nature; why to her, in that hour, all around was but a painted scene; an unreal thing that with its mockery pained her wearied heart; yearning as it did for what lay beyond. Who could have thought — who had seen that beautiful creature — that she walked with death? And yet, with no eyes, no ears, for the lovely sights and sounds about her, she walked and talked with the great Comforter. Her look was solemn, too; as though caught from her companion. Her eye was full and clear; and now gleaming strangely as with the light of another world. And now she would press her forehead with her small thin hand, as though to soothe its misery; and now she would look clouded and perplexed; and now, so sweet

a smile of patience would break into her face, that it was to wrong her nobleness to pity her. And still — as we have said — she talked with death.

St. James lay in a deep sleep. For a few moments he had been left alone — his door unclosed. With soft, but sudden step, a man entered the apartment. It was Ebenezer Snipeton. He had slept half-way on his journey from London; and rising early had ridden hard that he might surprise his solitary wife with a husband's smiles at breakfast. The morning was so beautiful that its spirit had entered even the heart of Ebenezer; and so, he had ridden, for him, very gaily along. Yes; he was touched by the season. He felt — or thought he felt — that there was something under the blue sky, something almost as good as ready gold. He looked with a favourable eye upon the primroses that lighted up the hedge-sides, and thought them really pretty: thought that, when all was said, there might really be some use in flowers. Once, too, he checked his horse into a slow walk, that he might listen to a lark that sang above him, and with its gushing melody made the sweet air throb. He smiled too, grimly smiled, at the cunning of two magpies that, alighted from a tall elm, walked in the road, talking — though with unslit tongues — of their family's affairs; of where best to provide worms for their little ones; of their plumage, sprouting daily; of the time when they would fly alone; and of other matters, perhaps, too familiar to the reader, if he be parental. And Ebenezer thought nothing was so beautiful as the country; as, in truth, other men like Ebenezer might have thought at four or five in the morning: but then as 'Change hours approach, the romance fades with

the early mist; and at 10, A.M., the Arcadian somehow finds himself the scrivener. Thus, too, the early rising man of law — suburban lodged — may before breakfast feel his heart leap with the lambkins in the mead; but, breakfast swallowed, he journeys with unabated zeal, inexorable to the parchment.

And Ebenezer, as he rode, determined henceforth to look on everything with smiling eyes. Yes; he had before always stared at the wrong side of the tapestry. He would henceforth amend such unprofitable foolishness. He had all to make man happy; wealth, a lovely wife, and no gout. To be sure, there were a few things of former times that — well, he would hope there was time enough to think of them. Of them, when the time came, he would repent; and that, too, most vehemently. And so Ebenezer forgot his wrinkled face; almost forgot the wart upon his nose. And Clarissa loved him? Of course. It was not her nature to be impetuous: no, she was mild and nun-like; he had chosen her for those rare qualities, but she loved him as a meek and modest gentlewoman ought to love her husband. This sweet conviction brought Ebenezer to his court-yard door. It was open. Well, there was nothing strange in that. Nicholas, of course, was up; and yet — where was he? Ebenezer's heart seemed to fall fathoms; to drop in his body, like a plummet. In a moment, the earth was disenchanted. There, before the eyes of Ebenezer, stood Ebenezer withered, with the bristled wart bigger than ever upon his nose; in his sudden despair, he saw his bad gifts magnified. And there was something, too, about the house that looked suspicious. The windows seemed to leer at him. The old house-

dog crawled towards him, with no wag in his tail. The sparrows chirped mockingly. The house now looked as though it held a corpse — and now, as though deserted. Ebenezer held his breath and listened. He heard nothing — nothing. And now, far, far away, from a thick, night-dark wood, the cuckoo shouted. Ebenezer passed into the court-yard, and entered his silent house. In a few moments he stood beside the couch of the sleeping St. James.

A terrible darkness fell upon the old man's face as he gazed at the patient. A tumult, an agony of heart was raging within him, and he shook like a reed. Still he was silent; silent and struggling to master the fury that possessed him. He breathed heavily; and then seated himself in a chair, and still with the eyes of a ghost looked on the sleeper. Devilish thoughts passed through the old man's brain: murder whispered in his ear, and still he fiercely smiled and listened. With his five fingers he could do it — strangle the disturber in his sleep. And the old man looked at his hands and chuckled. And now there is a quick step in the passage; and now, Clarissa enters the apartment.

"Dear Sir! husband," at length she uttered.

Suddenly standing statue-like, the old man with pointing figure, and fierce accusing face, asked "Who is this?"

Ere Clarissa could answer, hasty feet were heard in the hall, and Mrs. Wilton entered the room, followed by a thick-set man, with a red, round, oily face, and his hair matted with stale powder. He was dressed in a very brown black coat, that scarcely looked made for him; with buckskin breeches, and high riding boots. Under one arm he carried a thick-thonged whip; and

in his right hand, prominently held forth, as challenging the eyes of all men, a rusty beaver. "Couldn't come before — very sorry, but it always is so; those paupers — I'm sure of it, it's like 'em — they always do it on purpose. It's a part of the wicked obstinacy of the poor, and I don't know, Sir, whether you've observed it; but the poor are always obstinate — it's in 'em from the beginning. I've not brought so many into the world — the more my ill-luck — without knowing their wickedness from the first." Thus spoke, in high, brassy voice, Mr. Peter Crossbone — unconsciously flattered by the poor as Doctor Crossbone — parish doctor; who, when sought for at his house by Nicholas, was four miles away, summoned to assist the introduction of another pauper baby into this overstocked, and therefore pauperised planet. What Mercury, Venus, and other respectable planets must think of this our reckless, disreputable mother earth — this workhouse planet, the shame and reproach of all better systems — it is not for a son of earth to say. But, surely, if Mercury, Venus, and others know anything of our goings on, they must now and then look down upon us with ineffable scorn: at least, they ought. And yet, they do not; but with all our sins and all our foolishness, still beam upon us with eyes of love and tenderness.

The voice of Crossbone immediately awakened the patient. Crossbone had, however, in his time sent so many patients to sleep, that he might fairly be permitted occasionally to disturb a slumberer. St. James, observing Snipeton, rose up hastily, and with his blood burning in his face, was about to speak.

"You must be quiet, Sir. Mrs. Wilton has told

me all that a mere woman can know of your case, and — I am sorry to say it to you, Sir,” — and here Crossbone shook his head, and heaved a laborious sigh — “I’m sorry to say it, you must be very quiet.”

“But, Mr. Snipeton,” cried St. James, “permit me even now to explain —”

“The doctor says, no,” answered Snipeton, and his lip curled, “you must be quiet. There will be time for us to talk, when your wounds are healed. For the present, we will leave you with your surgeon.” And Snipeton, looking command at his wife, quitted the room, followed by his obedient, trembling help-mate.

“Phwagh!” cried Crossbone, ‘possessing himself of his patient’s wrist, “a race-horse pulse; a mile a minute. Fever, very high. Let me look at your tongue, Sir: don’t laugh, Sir — pray don’t laugh” — for St. James was already tittering at the solemnity of Crossbone — “a doctor is the last man to be laughed at.”

“That’s true indeed: I never before felt the force of that truth,” said St. James.

“Your tongue, Sir, if you please?” St. James, mastering his mirth, displayed that organ.

“Ha! Humph! Tongue like a chalk-pit. This, Sir,” and here Crossbone instinctively thrust both his hands into his pockets, “this will be a long bout, Sir — a very long bout.”

“I think not — I feel not,” said St. James, smiling. “‘Tis nothing — a mere nothing.”

“Ha, Sir!” cried Crossbone. “‘Tis pleasant — droll, sometimes — to hear what people call nothing; and in a few days, they’re gone, Sir; entirely gone.

But I'll not alarm you — I have had worse cases — nevertheless, Sir, a man with a hole in his skull, such a hole as that" — and here Crossbone tightly closed his eyelids, and gave a sharp, short shake of the head — "but I'll not alarm you. Still, Sir, if you've any little affairs to make straight — there's a jewel of a lawyer only five miles off, the prettiest hand at a will —"

"I'll not trouble him this bout, doctor," said St. James, who saw as clearly into Crossbone, as though, like Momus' man, he wore a pane of the best plate-glass in his bosom. "I have every faith in you."

"Sir, the confidence is flattering: and I think between us, we may cheat the worms. Nevertheless, it's an ugly blow — the eighth of an inch more to the right or left, and —"

"I know what you would say," cried St. James. "Blows are generally dealt after that fashion; there's great good luck in 'em. The faculty are often much indebted to the eighth of an inch, more or less."

"You must not talk, Sir: indeed, you must not, delighted as otherwise I should be to hear you. — Yes: now I see the whole of the mischief: now I am thoroughly possessed of the matter," and Crossbone looked with an air of considerable satisfaction at the wound. "'Twill be a tedious, but a beautiful case. Pray, Sir, should you know the ruffian who has nearly deprived the world of what I am sure will be — with a blessing on my poor assistance" — and here Crossbone softly closed his hands and bowed — "one of its noblest ornaments? Should you know the wretch?"

"I don't know — perhaps — I can't say," answered St. James, carelessly.

"When you see him, no doubt? And I am delighted to inform you the villain is secured. With the blessing of justice he'll be hanged; which will be a great consolation to all the neighbourhood. Yes; I heard it all, as I came along. The ruffian, with your blood upon his hands, was taken at the Lamb and Star — taken with a purse of gold in his pocket. His execution will be a holiday for the whole country;" and Crossbone spoke as of a coming jubilee.

"Taken, is he?" cried St. James, with a vexed look. "I'm sorry for it. Come, doctor, I must leave this to-day. My hurt is but a trifle; but I can feel, can appreciate your professional tenderness. I must make towards London this very morning."

"Humph! Well, Sir, we'll talk about it; we'll see what's to be done;" said Crossbone, with sudden melancholy at the resolute manner of his head-strong patient. "Nevertheless, you must let me dress your wound, and then take a little potion that I'll make up for you, and then — we shall see." Hereupon, St. James placidly resigned himself to the hands of Crossbone, who very leisurely drest the wound, again and again declaring that the patient was only on this side of the grave by the eighth of an inch. There never had been a skull so curiously broken. At length, Crossbone took his leave of the sufferer, with the benevolent assurance that he would make up something nice for him; of which the patient silently determined not to swallow a drop.

"Well, doctor?" asked Snipeton, with a savage leer, as Crossbone passed into the hall, — "how is his lordship now?"

"Lordship!" exclaimed Crossbone, now looking

wonderment, and now smirking — “is he really a lord? Bless me!”

“How is he, man?” cried Snipeton, fiercely.

“Hush! Mr. Snipeton — hush, we can’t talk here; for I’ve a great responsibility — I feel it, a great responsibility — hush, my dear Sir — hush!” and Crossbone trod silently as though he walked on felt, and lifting his finger with an air of professional command, he led Snipeton into an adjoining apartment, where sat Clarissa, pale and motionless. Here Snipeton expected an answer to his question; but Crossbone, raising his eyes and his closed hands — a favourite gesture with him when deeply moved — only said, “and he is a lord!”

“Well, lords die, don’t they?” asked Snipeton, with a sneer.

“Why” — Crossbone unconsciously hesitated — “yes. And, between ourselves, Mr. Snipeton, — I can speak confidently on the matter, having the gentleman in my hands, he is” — Crossbone gave a knell-like emphasis to every syllable — “he is in very great danger.”

“Indeed?” cried old Snipeton, and a smile lighted up his withered face, and he looked intently at his wife, as her hand unconsciously grasped her chair. “Indeed?” repeated the old man very blithely.

“Your pardon, for a minute, my good Sir,” said the apothecary. “I’ll just send this to my assistant — your man Nicholas must mount and gallop — for there’s a life, a very dear life to the country no doubt, depending on it.” And Crossbone proceeded to write his sentence in his best bad Latin.

Clarissa felt that her husband’s eye was upon her;

yet sat she statue-like, with a terrible calmness in her pale face. The old man, his heart stung by scorpion jealousy, gazed on her with savage satisfaction. And she knew this; and still was calm, tranquil as stone. She felt the hate that fed upon her misery, yet shrank not from its tooth.

"Mrs. Wilton," said Crossbone, as the housekeeper timidly entered the room, "you'll give this to Nicholas — tell him to gallop with it to my assistant, Mr. Sims; and, above all, let him take care of the medicine, for there's life and death — a lord's life and death in it," said the doctor, unconscious of the probable truth he uttered.

"And his lordship," said old Snipeton, gently rubbing his hands, "his lordship is in very great danger?"

"The fact is, Mr. Snipeton, there are men — I blush to say it, who belong to our glorious profession — there are men who always magnify a case that they may magnify their own small abilities, their next-to-nothing talent, in the treatment of it. I need not say that Peter Crossbone is not such a man. But this, Sir, I will say; that every week of my life I do such things here in the country — hedge-side practice, Sir, nothing more; hedge-side practice; — such things that if any one of 'em was done in London, that one would lift me into my carriage, and give me a cane with ten pounds' worth of virgin gold upon it. But, Sir, no man can cultivate a reputation among paupers. It's no matter what cure you make; they're thought things of course; paupers are known to stand anything. Why there was a case of hip-joint I had — there never was so sweet a case. If that hip-joint had been a lord's,

as I say, I ought to have stepped from it into my carriage. But it was a cow-boy's, Sir; a wretched cow-boy's; a lad very evilly-disposed — very: he'll be hanged, I've no doubt, — and, Sir, isn't it a dreadful thing to consider, that a man's genius — a case like that — should go to the gallows, and never be heard of? I put it to you, Sir, isn't it dreadful?"

Snipeton grunted something that Crossbone took as an affirmative; and, thus encouraged, proceeded. "Ha, Sir! how different is London practice among people who really are people! What's that, Sir, to the — yes, I must say it — to the disgrace of being a parish doctor? Now, Sir, the man — the man-midwife, Sir, in a proper walk of society, feels that he is nobly employed. He's bringing dukes and lords into the world; he's what I call cultivating the lilies, that, as they say, neither toil nor spin: that's a pleasure — that's an honour — that's a delight. But what does a parish man-midwife do, Sir? Why, he brings paupers upon the earth: he does nothing but cultivate weeds, Sir — weeds: and if he is a man of any feeling, Sir, he can't but feel it as a thing beneath him. Mr. Snipeton, I'm almost ashamed of myself to declare, that within these eight-and-forty hours I've brought three more weeds into the world."

"Humph!" said Snipeton.

"And, as a man who wishes well to his country, you may guess my feelings. How different, now, with the man who practises among people who, as I say, are people! A beautiful high-life baby is born. The practitioner may at once be proud of it. In its first little squeal he hears the voice, as I may say, of the House of Lords. In its little head he sees, if I may be

allowed to use the expression, the *ovaria* of acts of parliament; for he's a born law-maker. About its little, kicking, red leg, he already beholds the most noble Order of the Garter. Now, Sir, this is something to make a man proud of his handiwork: but, Sir, what is the reflection of the parish doctor? He never works for his country. No; when he looks upon a baby — if he's any feelings worthy of a man — he must feel that he's brought so much offal into the world. He looks upon a head which is to have nothing put into it; nothing, perhaps, but sedition and rebellion, and all that infamy. He sees little fingers that are born — yes, Sir, born — to set wires for hares; and the fact is, if, as I say, the man has feelings, he feels that he's an abettor of poaching, and all sorts of wickedness; — of wickedness that at last — and it's very right it should be so — at last takes the creature to the gallows. Now, Sir, isn't it a dreadful thing for a man — for a professional man, for a man who has had a deal of money spent upon his education — isn't it a dreadful thing for him to know that he may be only a sort of purveyor to the gallows? I feel the wrong, Sir; feel it, acutely, here;" and Crossbone tapped his left side with his fore-finger. "I know that I'm an abettor to a crying evil, going about as I do, bringing weeds into the world: but I can't help it, it's my business: nevertheless I feel it. Something ought to be done to put a stop to it: I'm not politician enough to say what; but unless something's done, all I know is this, the weeds will certainly overgrow the lilies."

"And your patient, his gallant and amiable lordship," said Snipeton, still eyeing his wife, "is in danger?"

"Great danger," answered Crossbone. "Nevertheless, with a blessing — understand me, Mr. Snipeton, with a blessing, for however wondrous my cure, I hope I have not the presumption to take it all to myself — no, I trust, without offence be it said, to some practitioners I could name, that I have some religion — therefore, with a blessing, his lordship may be set upon his legs. But it will be a long job, a very long job; and he mustn't be removed. Just now, he's in a slight delirium; talked about travelling towards London this very day. 'Twould be death, Sir; certain death." And Crossbone blew his nose.

"Indeed! Certain death?" repeated Snipeton, smiling grimly; and still watching the face of his wife. "I fear — I mean I hope — Mr. Crossbone, that your anxiety for so good, so handsome a young man — a nobleman too — may, without any real cause, increase your fears. For, as you say, we ought to be anxious for the lilies."

"I'd have given the worth of — of — I don't know what — could I have been here before. Two or three hours earlier might have made all the difference; for his lordship has great nervous irritability; is most wonderfully and delicately strung. But I was away, as I say, producing the weeds, Sir. Yes, I've ridden I'm ashamed to own how many miles since ten o'clock last night; and what's my reward, Sir? What, as parish doctor and midwife, is my consolation? Why this, Sir; that I've helped to bring misery and want, and I don't know how many other sorts of vices into the world, when I might — for without vanity I will say it — when I might have been employed for the future honour and glory of my country. Ha, Mr.

Snipeton, happy is the professional man who labours among the lilies! Sweet is his satisfaction! Now, Sir, when I ride home early in the morning — for the parish people, as I say, always make a point of knocking a man up at the most unseasonable hour; they do it on purpose, Sir, to show the power they have over you — now, Sir, when I'm riding home, what's my feelings? Why, Sir, as a lover of my country, there's something in my breast that won't let me feel happy and comfortable. There's something that continually reproaches me with having helped to add to the incumbrance of the nation: as I say, that distresses me with the thought that I've been cultivating weeds, Sir, nothing but weeds. Now a job like the present I look upon as a reward for my past misfortunes. It is a beautiful case!"

"Because so full of danger?" said Snipeton, still looking at his pale and silent wife.

"It is impossible that a blow could have been struck more favourably for a skilful surgeon. The sixteenth part of an inch, Sir, more or less on one side or the other, and that young man must have been a very handsome corpse."

Snipeton made no answer; but with clenched teeth, and suppressed breath, still glared at his wife. Passion shook him, yet he controlled it; his eyes still upon the pale face that every moment grew whiter. Another instant, and Clarissa fell back in her chair, speechless, motionless. Her husband moved not, but groaned despairingly.

"Fainted!" cried Crossbone. "Call Mrs. Wilton," and at the same moment the housekeeper appeared. With anguish in her look she hastened to her mistress.

"Nothing, nothing at all," said the apothecary; and then, with a smirk towards Snipeton, "nothing, my dear Sir, but what's to be expected."

"She's worse, Sir — much worse, I fear, than you suppose," said Mrs. Wilton, and she trembled.

"I think, Ma'am," replied Crossbone with true pill-box dignity, "I think I ought to know how ill a lady is, and how ill she ought to be. Have you no salts — no water, in the house?"

"I shall be better — in a moment, better," said Clarissa feebly; and then grasping the arm of Mrs. Wilton, she added, "help me to my room." She then rose with an effort, and supported by the housekeeper, quitted the apartment. And still her husband followed her with eyes glaring like a wild beast's. Then, looking up, he caught the relaxed, the simpering face of the apothecary.

"In the name of the fiends," cried Snipeton, fiercely, "wherefore, with that monkey face, do you grin at me?"

"My dear Sir?" said Crossbone, smiling still more laboriously, "my dear Sir, you're a happy man!"

"Happy!" cried Snipeton, in a hoarse voice, and with a look of deepest misery — "Happy!"

"Of course. You ought to be. What more delightful than the hope of — eh? — a growing comfort to your declining years — a staff, as the saying is, to your old age?"

The mystic meaning of the apothecary flashed upon the husband; the old man shook, as though ague-stricken, and covering his face with his hands, he fell heavily as lead into a chair.

Mr. Crossbone was silent in his astonishment. He

looked wonderingly about him. Was his practice to be so greatly enlarged in one day? Could it be possible that Snipeton, a man who wore like oak, could be ill? Snipeton, to be sure, was not, to Crossbone's thought, a lily patient; but then, how very far was he above the weeds! The apothecary was about to feel Snipeton's pulse; had the professional fingers on the wrist, when the old man snatched his arm away, and that with a vigour that well nigh carried Crossbone off his legs. The apothecary was about to pay some equivocal compliment to the old gentleman's strength, when Nicholas, flustered, with a startling piece of news, ran in with the medicine duly compounded by Mr. Sims.

"They was bringing the murderer to the house, that the gentleman" — for Nicholas knew not the sufferer was a lord — "might 'dentify the bloodspiller afore he died."

And Nicholas repeated truly what he had heard. Rumour had travelled — and she rarely goes so fast as when drawn by lies — to the Lamb and Star. And there — not stopping to alight — she hallooed into the gaping ears of the landlady the terrible intelligence that the young gentleman almost murdered last night, lay at Dovesnest; that his wound was mortal; that he was dying fast; that he had already made his will, Dorothy Vale and Ebenezer Snipeton having duly witnessed it. This news, sooner than smoke, filled every corner of the house. Great was the stir throughout the Lamb and Star. Tipps, the constable, on the instant, wore a more solemn look of authority; on the instant, summoned St. Giles to prepare for his removal, at the same time cautiously feeling the handcuffs to learn if they still remained true to their trust. The

barber left a pedlar half-shaved to accompany the party; and in a few minutes the horse was put to the cart; and St. Giles, who spoke not a syllable, was seated in it between Tipps and the landlord, Mr. Blink having donned his Sunday coat and waistcoat, that he might pay proper respect to the solemnity; whilst the barber, grasping a cudgel, guarded the culprit from behind. "Stop! shall I take the blunderbuss, for fear?" asked the landlord of Tipps, and eyeing St. Giles. "No," answered the constable, smiling confidently and looking affectionately at the manacle, "no; them dear cuffs never deceived me yet." Crack went the whip -- away started the horse; and Tipps, the landlord, and the barber, looked about them freshly, happily; smiling gaily in the morning sun -- gaily as though they were carrying a sheep to market -- ay, a sheep with a golden fleece.

And the landlady watched the whirling wheels, and with heart-warm wish (poor soul!) wished that the wretch might be hanged, yes, fifty feet high. And Becky, the maid, in her deep pity, braving the tongue of her mistress, stood sobbing in the road, and then, as suddenly inspired, plucked off one of her old shoes, and flung it after St. Giles, with kindly superstition as she said for luck. "For she know'd it, and could swear it; the poor cretur's hands was as innocent of blood as any babby's." Foolish Becky! By such presumptuous pity -- a pity, as Mrs. Blink thought, flying in the face of all respectability, did you fearfully risk the place of maid-of-all-work at a hedge-side hotel; a place worth a certain forty shillings a year, besides the complimentary half-pence.

Return we to Nicholas. Ere Snipeton and Cross-

bone were well possessed of the news, the cart drove up before the window. "And there is the murderer!" cried Crossbone. "Bless me! there's no need at all to try that man — there's every letter of Cain all over the villain's face. A child at the horn-book might spell it. And now they're going to bring him in. Ha! my fine fellow," added the apothecary, as St. Giles alighted; "there's a cart you won't get into so quickly, I can tell you. What a bold looking villain! With so much blood upon him; too! A lord's blood, and to look so brazenly! What do you think, Mr. Snipeton?"

Now, Snipeton was not a man of overflowing charity, yet, oddly enough, he looked at St. Giles with placid eyes. The old man, to the scandal of Crossbone, merely said, "Poor fellow! He looks in sad plight. Poor fellow!"

"In a few moments, Tipps, the constable, was shown to the presence of the master of Dovesnest. "He was very sorry to make a hubbub in his honour's house, but as the gentleman was dying, there was no time to be lost afore he swore to the murderer. Sam, from the Lamb and Star, had gone off to the justice to tell him all about it, and in a jiffy Mr. Wattles would be there."

"I think," observed Crossbone, "I think I had better see how my distinguished patient is." With this, the apothecary, making himself up for the important task, softly quitted the room.

"And you're sure you have the right man?" asked Snipeton of the constable.

"Never made a blunder in all my life, Sir," answered Tipps, with a mild pride.

"Mr. Justice Wattles," cried Nicholas, big with the words, and showing in the magistrate.

"Mr. Snipeton," said Wattles, "this business is —"

But the Justice was suddenly stopped by the doctor. Crossbone rushed in, slightly pale and much agitated, exclaiming, "The patient's gone!"

"Not dead!" cried Snipeton, exultingly, and rubbing his hands.

"Dead? no! But he's gone — left the house — vanished; — come and see!" Crossbone, followed by all, rushed to the room in which, some minutes before, lay the murdered St. James.

He was gone! All were astonished. So great was the surprise, not a word was spoken; until Dorothy Vale, who had crept into the room, with her cold, calm voice, addressed the apothecary. Pointing to the stains in the couch, she said, "If you please, Sir, can you give me nothing to take out that blood?"

CHAPTER XIV.

"AND now," thinks the reader, "St. Giles is free. There is no charge against him; he is not the murderer men, in his wretchedness, took him for. St. James, with his injuries upon him, has withdrawn himself; and once again the world lies wide before St. Giles." Not so. There still remains, to his confusion, a hard accuser. St. Giles is destitute. In the teeming, luxurious county of Kent, amidst God's promises of plenty to man, he is a guilty interloper. He may not grasp a handful of the soil, he cannot purchase one blade of wheat; he is a pauper and a vagrant; a foul presence in the world's garden, and must therefore be punished for his intrusion. Every rag he carries is an accusing tongue: he is destitute and wandering: he has strayed into the paradise of the well-to-do, and must be sharply reprov'd for his whereabouts. And therefore St. Giles will be committed for a season to the county gaol, as a rogue and vagabond. The roguery is not proved upon him, but it has been shown that whilst decent people have goose-beds and weather-proof chambers, he, at the best, has straw and a barn. It is, too, made a misdemeanor against mother earth to sleep upon her naked breast, with only the heavens above the sleeper; and as St. Giles had often so offended — he could not deny the iniquity — he was, we say, committed to gaol by Justice Wattles, as rogue and vagabond. Now, to punish a

man for having nothing, is surely a sport invented by Beelzebub for the pleasure of the rich; yes, to whip a rascal for his rags is to pay flattering homage to cloth of gold. Nothing was proved against St. Giles but want; which, being high treason against the majesty of property, that large offence might be reasonably supposed to contain every other.

"Something, I've no doubt, will be brought against him," said Justice Wattles; "in the mean time, he stands committed as a rogue and vagabond." And Tipps, the constable, led away his prisoner, preceded by the host of the Lamb and Star; whilst the dispirited barber very dolorously expressed his disappointment, "that he left his business and all, and only for a ragamuffin as wasn't worth salt! If he hadn't thought him a murderer, he'd never have troubled his head with such rubbish." "No, and you'd never have had my cart," said the landlord to Tipps. "I thought the fellow would turn out somebody; and he's nothing but a vagrom. Come up!" cried the Lamb and Star; and sharply whipping his horse to ease his own bad temper, he drove off, the barber vainly hallooing for a seat in the vehicle. Whereupon, Constable Tipps, casting a savagely inquiring look at St. Giles's handcuffs, with an oath bade his prisoner move on, and then railed at his own particular planet, that had troubled him with such varmint.

Nevertheless, although St. Giles's hands were white, murder had done its worst. As yet none, save the homicide, already blasted with the knowledge, knew of the deed. How lovelily the sun shone; how beautiful all things looked and beamed in its light: the lark sang, like a freed spirit, in the dome of heaven,

and yet, beneath it, lay a terrible witness of the guilt of man; a mute and bloody evidence of another Cain! St. Giles, however, was on his way to the county gaol, ere the deed was discovered. Not willing to give an account of himself, he was committed to imprisonment and hard labour in punishment of his destitution. That he was not in addition whipped for his poverty, testified strongly to the injudicious clemency of Justice Wattles. Such mercy went far to encourage rags and tatters.

Leave we for a while the desolate home of Dovesnest. Leave we that miserable old man, Snipeton, writhing at his hearth; now striving to seek for hope, for confidence, in the meek and wretched face of his wife, and now starting at her look as at a dagger's point.

A few hours had passed, and again the Lamb and Star was a scene of tumult. And this time, there was no doubt of the atrocity. It was now impossible that the worthy folks, assembled in the hostelry, could be tricked into useless sympathy. There was now no doubt that a man was killed; and if St. Giles had escaped the charge of former homicide, why such escape only the more strongly proved his guilt of the new wickedness. "He'll be hanged, after all!" cried the landlord, with the air of a man foretasting an enjoyment. "The villain! he was born for the gibbet," said the barber; if I wouldn't walk over glass bottles to see him hanged, I'm not a Christian." Whilst the barber and others were thus vehemently declaiming their Christianity, there arrived at the Lamb and Star a most important person. Up to that hour, he had been a rustic of average insignificance; but he suddenly

found himself a creature of considerable interest — a man, heartily welcomed, as a boon and a treasure. This happy man was one Pyefinch; and was known to the surrounding country as a mole-catcher of tolerable parts. It was he who had discovered the body of the murdered man: and had he discovered some great blessing to the human family, it is very questionable whether he would have been so heartily welcomed by many of its members. It had, however, been his good fortune — for we must still call it so — to light upon the body of Farmer Willis, bloody and stark in his own meadow; and again and again was he pressed to rehearse the tale, whilst mugs of ale rewarded the story-teller. Instantly was Pyefinch fastened upon by Mrs. Blink, and it was hard to deny such a woman anything. After short preparation, did the mole-catcher — stimulated by malt and hops — begin his terrible history.

“Why, you see, it was in this manner,” said Pyefinch. “I was a goin’ along by Cow Meadow, ’bout four in the mornin’ wi’ my dog Thistle, just to look arter the snares. Cruel sight of varmint there be along that meadow to be sure. Well, I was a thinking of nothing — or what I was a thinking on, for I scorns a lie, is nothin’ to nobody. Well, goin’ along in this manner, Thistle running afore me, and ahind me, and a both sides o’ me —”

“Never mind, Thistle,” cried the landlady, “come to the murder, Tom.”

“Ax your pardon, missus. I shall have to tell all this story at ’sized; I know what them chaps, the lawyers be, to bother a poor man who’s no scholar; so I’ve made my mind up, never to tell the story;

but after one way; then I'm cocksure not to be caught off my legs nohow." And Pyefinch drank, doubtless, to his own sagacity.

"Very right, Tom," cried the landlord; and then he turned with knit eyebrows to his wife. "Be quiet, will you? like all women; want the kernel without cracking the nut. Be quiet." And Blink gave a conjugal growl. "Go on, Tom."

"As I was a saying," continued the mole-catcher, "Thistle was a running afore me, and ahind me, and a both sides o' me — and barking as though he wished he could talk; just to say, how comfortable he felt, now that the spring was come — for depend upon it, dumb creturs have their notions of spring just as well as we — well, where was I?"

"Thistle was barking," prompted the landlady, fidgetting and casting about impatient looks.

"To be sure he was. Well, all on a sudden he held his tongue; he was then a good way on afore me, down in the pitch o' the field. I thought nothing o' that; when on a sudden he give cry agin, but quite a different bark to t' other. That didn't stagger me, neither; for I thought he'd lit on a hedgehog; and of all varmint o' the earth, Thistle hates a hedgehog; ha! worse than pison, that he do. Well, arter a while, Thistle runs up to me. You should ha' seen that dog," cried the mole-catcher, rising bolt from his seat, "his face was as full o' sense as any Christian's: his eyes! if they didn't burn in's head like any blacksmith's coals; and his jaw was dropt as if he couldn't shut it, it were so stiff wi' wunder — and all his hairs upon his back right away down to the end o' his tail stood

up like hedge-stakes — and he looked at me, as much as to say — ‘what do you think?’”

“Bless us, and save us!” cried the landlady, wondering at the discrimination of the dog.

“I didn’t make him no answer,” said the mole-catcher, “but walks on arter him, he looking behind him now and then, and shaking his head sometimes terrible, until I come to the pitch o’ the field; and there — oh, Lord!” Here Pyefinch seized the mug, and, emptying it, was newly strengthened. “There, I saw Master Willis in his best clothes — and you know he was always particular like in them matters — there I saw him, as at first I thought, fast asleep, looking so blessed happy, you can’t think. Howsum-ever, Thistle puts his nose to the grass, and sets up sich a howl, and then I sees a pool of blood, and then I run away as fast as legs ’ud carry me, right away to the farm. Well, they’d never looked for Master Willis. They’d thought he’d stayed at Canterbury all night; and there he was, poor soul! killed like a sheep in his own field. Terrible, isn’t it?” and Pyefinch presented the empty mug to the landlady, who, the tale being told, set the vessel down again.

“It’s the smugglers as has done it,” cried Becky. “They owed him a grudge since autumn, when he found their tubs among his corn; it’s the smugglers, as I’m a sinner.”

“The smugglers! — poor souls!” — said Mrs. Blink, who, though a licensed dealer in spirits, had, strangely enough, a large sympathy for contraband traders; “they wouldn’t hurt a lamb. It’s that villain that slept in the barn; and I only hope that you, Miss Trollop, knew nothing of the business.”

"Me!" exclaimed Becky, "me know anything!" Had it been any other than her mistress, Becky would have been too happy to vindicate the strength and volubility of her tongue. The woman rose strongly within her, and tempted her to speak: but she thought of her forty shillings per annum; and so the woman railed not, but cried.

"And how does Master Robert take it?" cried the landlord.

"Why, wonderful, considering," said the mole-catcher. "A little dashed at first, in course."

"And he that was so merry, too, at the dance! Well, it is a world to live in," moralised the barber. "He stood ale all round, and little thought that he'd no uncle. He danced with every gal above stairs, and never dreamed o' what was going on in Cow Meadow. He'll have the old man's land o' course? Poor soul! He'll feel it if anybody do."

"Wakes and fares won't be no worse for Master Robert," said the landlord. "That is, supposing this matter don't steady him. But, to be sure, what a noble soul it is! Well, if we could cry till the sea run over, it wouldn't bring back the old man; and so here's long life and good fortin to his heir. And a rare night we shall have of it — that is, when the mourning's over and it's all proper; yes; a rare night we shall have at the Lamb and Star."

"I wonder who he'll marry?" cried the landlady.

"Nobody," averred Mr. Blink; "he's too free a spirit — too noble a cretur. Besides, he knows too much of life. She must be a sharp thing — yes, she must get up very early for mushrooms, who'd get Bob Willis."

Of course, suspicion followed St. Giles to the gaol: but although his poverty, his houseless condition, and, more, his refusal to give any account of himself, fixed him in the minds of many as the murderer, there was no point, no circumstance (and many were the examinations of the vagrant,) that could connect him with the deed. It was an especial annoyance to several worthy people that nothing, as they said, could be brought home to St. Giles. He seemed, above all creatures, the very creature whom such an atrocity would fit; and yet the failure of all evidence was as complete as to certain folks it was distressing. However, there was one comfort. St. Giles was fast in prison as a rogue and vagabond; and, in good time, sufficient facts might rise up against him. He had been set down to be hanged; and in the cheerful faith of those who had judged him, it was impossible he should escape a doom so peculiarly fitted to him. Hence, St. Giles remained in gaol, like a fine haunch in a larder, to be some day feasted on.

A week had passed, and still justice was baffled. The murdered man slept in his grave, and still his murderer walked the free earth. Justice Wattles had a double motive for the restless zeal which animated him in his search for the culprit: there was his character as a magistrate; and, more; there was his feeling of kinship towards the victim, Farmer Willis being his brother-in-law. Hence, Justice Wattles, indefatigable in his purpose, called at Dovesnest. A most unwelcome visitor was his worship to Ebenezer Snipeton, then preparing to depart from his hermitage for the din of London; and at the very moment the magistrate was announced, rehearsing a farewell speech to Cla-

rissa; a speech that, until her husband's return, should be to her as a charm, an amulet, to preserve her from the temptations of evil spirits. Snipeton had compelled himself to believe the story of his wife, avouched, too, as it was by Mrs. Wilton. He had tyrannised over his heart that it should give credence to what he fain would hope! And so, he would leave home, a happy husband, convinced, assured past all suspicion, of the unbroken faith, the enduring loyalty of his devoted wife. It was better so to feed himself, than yield to the despair that would destroy him. Better to be duped by falsehood, than crushed by truth. It was accident — mere accident — that had brought St. James to his house; and that, too, in such a plight, it was impossible that Clarissa could deny him hospitable usage. And with this thought, a load was lifted from the old man's heart, and he would — yes, he would be happy. Snipeton was wandering in this Paradise of Fools, when the name of Justice Wattles called him home.

"Good morning, Mr. Snipeton — a dreadful matter this, Sir — a dreadful calamity to fall upon a respectable family — a startling end, Sir, for my poor brother, — so punctual and so excellent a man," were the first words of the Justice.

"Very terrible," answered Snipeton. "I have already heard all the particulars," and he pulled on his glove.

"Not all, Sir — I'm afraid not all," said Wattles. "That young gentleman who was brought to your house —"

"Well?"

"He's a young nobleman, to be sure; but still it's

odd, Mr. Snipeton; I say, it's odd," and the Justice leered at Ebenezer.

"Speak out, man;" cried Snipeton: and the Justice pulled himself up at the abruptness of the command. "What of him?"

"Why, the truth is, Mr. Snipeton, that young nobleman has been seen lurking about here very much of late. That's odd. Do you know what business brings him to these parts?"

"How should I know?" exclaimed Snipeton, looking fiercely at the Justice, as at one who would read the secrets of his soul.

"To be sure; perhaps not," said Wattles, "and yet you see it's odd: he was brought here wounded, the very night my poor brother — the most respectable man in Kent — what a sort of stain it is upon the family! — the very night he met his fate. You didn't know, then, that the young nobleman used to hang about these quarters?"

"Justice Wattles," replied Snipeton, "if as a magistrate you would examine me, I must attend your summons. My house is not a court."

"Certainly not — certainly not," answered the Justice, suddenly taking up his dignity. "I ask your pardon; of course, this matter will be sifted elsewhere — thoroughly sifted. Only believing the young nobleman to be your friend—"

"He's no friend of mine," said Snipeton, sullenly.

"Well, a friend of Mrs. Snipeton's — oh, my dear Sir! don't look at me in that way — I meant no offence, none whatever; I meant an acquaintance — a visitor of Mrs. Snipeton's, nothing more. But, of course, the law can reach him — of course, he can

be made to explain everything — lord as he is. Still, being a friend of yours — I mean of your wife's — I intended to show him some consideration. Nevertheless, as you say your house is not a court, why good morning, Mr. Snipeton — good morning." And saying this, Justice Wattles, with all the dignity he could compass, quitted the master of Dovesnest. Poor Snipeton! but now he was blowing bubbles of hope, so brightly tinted; but now they were floating about him in a sunny sky, and now they were broken, vanished!

As Justice Wattles, with a flushed countenance, crossed the threshold of Dovesnest, he was encountered by Nicholas, the sole serving-man of Snipeton. "Bless me! your worship," cried Nicholas, "here's luck in meeting you — here's a something as I was first going to show master, and then to bring to you," and with this, the man presented to the magistrate an old black leather pocket-book.

"God save us!" cried Wattles, and he trembled violently — "where did this come from?"

"I found it in a hedge — just as it is — I haven't looked at it — in a hedge by Pinkton's Corner," said the man.

Wattles, with great emotion, opened the book — turned deadly pale — suddenly closed it again, and with a faint, forced smile at his white lips, said — "Oh, it's nothing — nothing at all. But you may as well leave it with me, Nicholas: if it's inquired for, I shall have it ready. You know it's in good hands, Nicholas; and take this for your honesty; and until I call upon you, say nothing at all about it — nothing at all." With this, the Justice unconsciously made a low bow to the serving-man, and walked a few steps rapidly

on. Suddenly he paused, and calling the man to him, gave him a guinea. "For your honesty, Nicholas — though the thing isn't worth a groat — still for your honesty; and as I've told you, till you hear from me, you need say nothing of the matter." Nicholas, well pleased to sell his silence on such terms, pocketed the guinea, and with a knowing nod at the Justice, went his way. Wattles walked hurriedly on, turning down a lane that skirted the Devil's Elbow. The old man trembled from head to foot; his eyes wandered, and his lips moved with unspoken words. Now he ran, and now staggered and tottered down the lane; and at length paused midway and looked cautiously about him. He then drew forth the pocket-book, and with deepest misery in his face, proceeded to search it. It contained nothing save a large gold ring, set with a cornelian. As he held it to the light, the old man sighed; then tears fast and thick fell from his eyes, and he sank down upon a bank, and, hiding his face in his hands, groaned most piteously. "God pardon him!" at length he cried — "but Robert's done it: Robert's killed the old man; it's Robert's ring — my Bible oath to it — his ring; and the Lord has brought it to witness against him. I was sure he had done it; no, no, not sure, — but I feared it, and — merciful heaven! — to butcher his own flesh and blood — to kill his own uncle!" Again the old man wept and sobbed, and wrung his hands in the very impotence of sorrow. "And what am I to do? Am I to hang him? Heaven shield us! Hang a Willis! — 'Twould be horrible. And then the disgrace to the family — the oldest in Kent! What shall I do — what shall I do?" again and again cried the Justice. "The mur-

derer must not escape; but then, to hang him! — the respectability of the family — the respectability of the family!" And thus was the old man perplexed. His horror of the deed was great; he wept earnest, truthful tears over the fate of his brother-in-law, a worthy, honest soul, whose greatest weakness had been, indeed, undue indulgence of his wretched assassin. All the horror, the ingratitude of his crime would present itself to the mind of the Justice, who would for the moment determine to denounce the homicide: and then his pride was touched; he thought of the shame, the lasting ignominy, as he deemed it, that would cling to the family, and thus held in doubt, suspense — he would in his weakness weep and pray of heaven to be supported and directed. "Robert's a monster that pollutes the earth," he would cry — "he must, he shall be hanged." And then the stern Justice would clasp his hands, and moan, and mutter — "But the disgrace to the family — the disgrace to the family!" And thus, unresolved, days passed, and Justice Wattles said no word of the pocket-book of the murdered man — breathed no syllable of the damning evidence, supplied by the ring, against his nephew; who, it appeared, had been wrought to the commission of the act, by the refusal of the old man to supply the means of his profuse expense, cast away as it was upon the idle and the profligate throughout the country. The old man had returned from Canterbury fair, as his assassin thought, with a large sum of money in his possession. The murderer, ready dressed for the village festival, had awaited his victim; had accomplished the act; and then, with hottest speed, made for the Lamb and Star, to join in

the revelry of the merry-makers. More of this, however, as we proceed in our history.

And now old Snipeton must say farewell to his young wife. How beautiful she looked! What an air of truth and purity was around her! How her mute meekness rebuked her husband's doubts! She wanly smiled and the old man reproached himself that for a moment he could suspect that angel sweetness. He had taken new resolution from her trustful gentleness. That smile of innocence had determined him. He would quit trade: retire from London. He had enough, more than enough, of worldly means; and he would no longer separate himself from such a wife; but — his present ventures realised — he would retire to Dovesnest, and there pass away a life, dedicating every moment, every feeling to the better treasure that there enriched him. Henceforth he would destroy, annihilate, every rising thought that should do her honour injury; he would be a confiding, happy husband. Nothing should peril the great felicity in store for him. With this thought, this fooling of the heart, he kissed his wife; and though she met his touch with lips of ice, he could not, would not, feel their coldness; but serenely left his home, and for many a mile upon the road strove to possess himself with the great assurance that he was still an honoured, happy husband. Oh, it was a sin, a great wickedness done to heaven's brightest truth to doubt it.

Poor old man! Wretched huckster! Tricked and betrayed in the bargain he had purchased: bought with so much money from the priest. Willingly befooled by hope, he could not see the desperate calmness, the firm, cold resolution that possessed his young

wife at the time of parting. At that moment, as she believed, she looked upon her husband for the last time: in that moment, it was her comfort that she bade farewell to him who made her life a daily misery — a daily lie. She had taken counsel with herself, and, come what might, would end the loathsome hypocrisy, that, like a foul disease, consumed her. He quitted her. She wept; and then a ray of comfort brightened her face: and she moved with lightened step, a thing of new-found liberty. She sought to be alone; and yet — it was very strange — that old housekeeper, Mrs. Wilton, would still find an excuse to follow her: still, with questioning face, would look upon her. The woman could not know her resolution? Impossible. Yet still, like a spy, the hireling of her husband, she would watch her. And then, at times, the woman gazed so mournfully at her, answered her with such strange emotion in her voice, with such familiar tenderness, she knew not how to rebuke her.

“And my master returns in a week?” said Mrs. Wilton; “a long time for one who loves a wife so dearly.”

“Loves me!” answered Clarissa with a shudder, which she strove not to disguise. “Yes; there it is — he loves me.”

“A great happiness, if wisely thought of,” said the housekeeper, with cold calm looks. “A great happiness.”

“No doubt, if wisely thought of,” rejoined Clarissa; then, with a sigh, she added: “How hard the task of wisdom! But we will not talk of this now, Mrs. Wilton; I have another matter to speak of: I am kept

such a prisoner here" — and Clarissa smiled, and tried to talk gaily — "that for once I am determined to play truant. Would you believe it? I have scarcely seen Canterbury. I have a mighty wish to visit the Cathedral; I hear it is so beautiful — so awful."

"I would you had spoken of this to Mr. Snipeton," said the housekeeper gravely.

"And wherefore? To have my wish refused? To be sentenced a prisoner to the house; or, at most, to the limits of the garden? No: I know his anxiety, his tenderness, his love for me, as you would say — therefore, if I would go at all, I must go unknown to my lord and owner."

"Lord and husband," you would say, observed Mrs. Wilton, looking full at Clarissa.

"Owner is sometimes a better word; at least, I feel it so. And therefore, as I am determined on my pilgrimage —"

"Very well, it must be made," said Mrs. Wilton. "Whenever you will, I will be ready to accompany you."

"Oh no; I will not take you from the house: it is necessary that you should remain. Dorothy is so dull and slow, I should not feel happy to leave her alone. Let Nicholas order a chaise, and he — yes, he can attend me. Now, no words, good Mrs. Wilton; for once I must have my way — for once you must not hope to deny me."

"And when, Mrs. Snipeton," added the housekeeper, "when do you go?"

"Oh, to-morrow," answered Clarissa, with forced vivacity.

Mrs. Wilton looked at the girl with piercing eyes; then slowly, gravely asked — “And when return?”

“Oh, the next day,” and the blood flushed in Clarissa’s face as the words fell from her.

“No, no, no: that day would never come; your burning face, your looks, tell me it would not.”

“Mrs. Wilton!” cried Clarissa, who vainly strove to look commanding, dignified; to play the mistress to the presumptuous menial. “Mrs. Wilton, by what right do you thus question my word?”

“By the right of love; yes, by the love I bear you, lady,” answered the housekeeper. “I know your heart; can see the wound within it. I know the grief that daily wears you; but, with the knowledge of a deeper wound — of grief more terrible — a grief made of remorse and shame — I implore you, leave not your home.”

“And why not? Since you know the bondage I endure — the loathsomeness of life I bear about me — the cancer of the heart that tortures me — the degradation of everything that makes life good and holy, — wherefore should I not break the chain that body and soul enslaves me? Tell me this,” exclaimed Clarissa; and her face grew deathly pale; and her whole form rose and dilated with the passion that, fury-like, possessed her.

“I have told you,” said Mrs. Wilton, — “for the more terrible grief that follows.”

“Can it be sharper, more consuming, than that I now endure?” asked Clarissa, smiling bitterly.

“Yes — yes!” was the answer, solemnly uttered.

“How know you this?” asked the young wife; and

she looked with new and curious interest at the woman fast changing before her. Changing. Her face always so calm, so self-possessed, so statue-like, relaxed and beamed with a sweet yet mournful look. It seemed as though to that time she had only played a part — that now, the true woman would reveal herself. Clarissa was surprised, subdued, by the new aspect of her housekeeper.

"You ask me, how I know this. It is a brief tale: and I will tell you. I knew a maid sold like yourself — sold is the word — in lawful wedlock. The man who purchased her was good and honourable; of the men whom the world accounts as its best citizens; plain, worthy, and dispassionate; a person most respectable. He would not, in his daily bargains, have wronged his neighbour of a doit. An upright, a most punctual man. And yet he took a wife without a heart. He loved the hollow thing that, like a speaking image, vowed in the face of God to do that she knew she never could fulfil, to love and honour him; and he, that just, good man, smiled with great happiness upon the pretty perjurer; and took her to his bosom as the treasure of the world. True, at times he had his doubts — his sad misgivings. He would look in his wife's face — would meet her cold, obedient eyes — and sometimes wonder when a heart would grow within her. He had married her, believing in such growth; it was his wisdom — his knowledge of mankind and the world — to be assured of it. And so they lived for three long years together; the chain of wedlock growing heavier with every heavy day. She became a mother. Even that new woman's life — that sudden knowledge that opens in the heart an un-

imagined fount of love — failed to harmonise her soul with him who was her child's father. Still they jarred; or, at best, were silent towards each other. I will hurry to the close. She left him; worse, she left her child. That silver link, that precious bond that should have held her even to scorn, unkindness, misery, — with sacrilegious act she broke. She left her husband for one who should have been her husband. You do not listen to me?"

"Yes — yes — yes," cried Clarissa — "every word; each syllable. Go on."

"For a few months she lived a mockery of happiness. A year or two passed, and then her lover left her, and she stood alone in the world, clothed with her harlot shame. It was then, indeed, she felt the mother: then, what should have been her joys were turned to agonies; and conscience, daily conscience, made her look within a glass to see a monster there. Oh, she has told me, again and again, has told me! The look, the voice of childhood — with all its sweetness, all its music — was to her as an accusing angel that frowned, and told her of her fall."

"And she never saw her child?" asked Clarissa.

"For years she knew not where to seek it. At length, accident discovered to her the place of its abode. And then the babe — the motherless innocence — had become almost a woman."

"And then the mother sought her?"

"No. Her husband still lived; she did not dare attempt it. Her child! How knew she that that child had not been taught to think her mother in the grave? And more; the mother had foregone her noblest claim

at that poor little one's best need — and could the wanton come back again to urge it? Therefore, unknown, she watched her; and, like a thief, stole glances of the precious creature of her blood — her only comfort, and her worst reproach. The girl became a wife, her father died, and then —"

"And then?" repeated Clarissa, as the woman paused in the fulness of her emotion.

"And then the mother dared not reveal herself. As servant, she entered her daughter's house, that, all unknown, she might feed her daily life with looking at her." The woman paused; and, with clasped hands, looked with imploring anguish in the face of Clarissa. That look told all: Clarissa, with a scream, leapt to her feet, and hung at her mother's neck.

"Be warned — be warned," cried the woman, and like a dead thing, she sank in a chair.

CHAPTER XV.

To the astonishment, the rage, and indignation of the neighbourhood, Robert Willis had been apprehended, charged with the murder of his uncle. After such audacity on the part of the law, no man held himself safe. The whole country rang with the charge; the whole country more or less sympathised with the innocent victim of the tyranny of justice. It was impossible to associate the jovial, warm-hearted, merry-maker with any wrong; so wholly had he won the hearts of all by his many feats of rustic skill, his many qualities of good fellowship. The men admired him for his athletic daring; and the women for his noble figure, his ruddy face, black whiskers, and very white teeth. To be sure, he had had his follies; now and then he had played the bully, and the small voice of detraction added, the black-leg: he had moreover broken a heart or so: but he had never wanted money to pay a treat; and young men would be young men, was the charitable creed of the treated. Nevertheless, it was impossible for justice to close her ears to rumours that, first muttered, grew louder and louder. Willis had been seen hurrying from Cow Meadow at the time that — according to evidence — the murder must have been committed. He had moreover paid many debts of late; had been seen with much money in his hands; and there was a strange, forced gaiety in his manner that showed him restless, ill at ease. In

fine, although Justice Wattles — the prisoner's relative, and the possessor of the dead man's pocket-book — loudly protested against the indignity offered to his kinsman; although he eloquently put it to his brother magistrates, whether it was in the circle of probability for one so respectably born and bred, to shed the blood of his own relation, — Robert Willis was committed, charged with the wilful murder of Arthur Willis. And then Justice Wattles said it was best it should be so: it was the shortest, clearest way, to stop the mouths of slanderers, and to show to the world the innocence, and, above all, the respectability of his kinsman. Yet were there people who wondered at the change so suddenly worked in the Justice. His face, before so round and red, became shrunk and yellow; and then he would strive to look so happy — would laugh at every other word he spoke; would prophesy with such enjoyment the triumph of his brave, his much-wronged relative.

And so the vagabond St. Giles and the gay and generous Robert Willis were brought together. In the very good old times of our history, there was deeper and better homage paid to the well-to-do who, somehow, had done ill and was imprisoned therefore, than in these our sterner days, when the successors of Blueskins and Sheppards, no longer hold their levees in gaol lobbies, and fine ladies may not prattle with felons. However lovely and interesting may be the doomed man to the female heart, his fascinations are to be contemplated only through the filmy medium of the newspapers, and not, as in those very good and much-lamented old times, hob and nob with the house-breaker and murderer. Hence, Robert Willis lived in

happier days. Hence, by the grace of money and station, had he many little indulgencies which softened the rigour of captivity. Wine and brandy came to him like good genii through the prison bars, and by their magic gave to stone walls a comfortable, jolly aspect; again placed the prisoner in a tavern; again surrounded him with the best of fellows; hearts of gold!

It was yet early morning, and Willis, flushed with drink, walked the court-yard with St. Giles; for whom, at their first meeting, he had shown a strange interest. How changed was he from the merry-maker who, but for a few moments, was before the reader at the Lamb and Star! He seemed to have grown bigger — burlier. His face was full-blooded; his eyebrows shagged and ragged; his eyes flashed to and fro, dwelling upon no object; and then he would laugh loudly, hollowly. He walked the court-yard, talking to St. Giles; and now and then slapping him on the shoulder, to the wonder of other more respectable prisoners, who much marvelled that a gentleman like master Robert Willis could take up with such a vagabond. And so they walked: and by degrees Willis laughed less, and spoke in a lower tone; and it was plain — from the agitation of his comrade — that he spoke of something strange and terrible. At length St. Giles stopped short, and cried, "I will hear no more — not a word more, I tell you. God forgive you!"

"Why, what's the matter, fool — butter-heart?" cried Willis, "I thought you a man, and you're a cur. Ha! ha! all's one for that;" and again Willis laughed, and pointed scornfully at St. Giles, as — with face aghast — he walked to the

further end of the court. Willis was about to follow him, when he was accosted by one of the turnkeys.

"Master Willis, here's Mr. Montecute Crawley, the lawyer, come to talk to you about your defence. He's in a great hurry; so, if you please, you must make haste: he's so much to do, he can't stay for nobody." And the turnkey only spoke the truth of the absorbing business of Mr. Montecute Crawley; to whose silver tongue the world owed the liberty of many a ruffian. Happy was the evil-doer whose means might purchase the good offices of Mr. Montecute Crawley! There was no man at the bar who could so completely extract the stain of blood from a murderer. Had he defended Sawny Bean, dipped a hundred times in infanticide, he would have presented him to the court as a shepherd with the bloom and fragrance of Arcady upon him. Worthy man! What a constitution had Mr. Montecute Crawley, to stand the wear and tear of his own feelings, racked, agonised, as they always were for his innocent, his much-persecuted client, the homicide or highwayman at the bar! Happily, his emotion was always so very natural, and so very intense, that again and again it touched the bosoms of the jury, who could not — simple creatures! — but believe so eloquent, so earnest a gentleman, when he not only vouched for the innocence of the unfortunate accused, but wept a shower of tears in testimony thereof. Tears, in fact, were Mr. Montecute Crawley's great weapons: but he had too true a notion of their value to use them save on extraordinary occasions. With all his tenderness, he had great powers of self-restraint; and, therefore, never

dropt a tear upon any brief that brought him less than five hundred guineas. He had heard of "the luxury of woe," and was determined that with him at least the luxury should bear its proper price. His coarse and stony-hearted brethren at the bar had, in the envy and brutality of their souls, nicknamed Mr. Montecute Crawley, the watering-pot. But he — good, silver-tongued man — heeded not the miserable jest. He talked and wept, and wept and talked, as though he felt assured that all the world believed his words and tears, and that the angels knew them to be only counterfeit.

And Robert Willis was now to interest the sympathies of Mr. Crawley, who had been paid the full weeping price — the fee being, as a junior counsel said, up to water-mark. The prisoner and his counsel were private together; and, as the accused went through his simple tale, it was delightful to perceive the intelligence that beamed in Mr. Montecute Crawley's eye, as though he spied a flaw, no wider than a spider's thread, in the indictment; and then for a moment he would place his ample brow — writ and overwrit with so many acts of Parliament — in his snow-pure hand, meditating a legal escape. "That's enough," said Mr. Crawley, abruptly stopping the prisoner: "I've made up my mind; yes, I see it at once; an alibi, of course; an alibi. You were at the dance at the Lamb and Star: you've witnesses — yes, I know — Mr. Swag, your attorney, has told me all, and —"

"And you think I shall get over it?" asked Willis, looking up with unabashed face at his defender. Mr. Montecute Crawley slightly nodded his head; where-

upon the prisoner, with grossest familiarity, offered his hand. Mr. Crawley knew what was due to the dignity of his profession; he, therefore, looked frozenly at the prisoner, rebuking him by that look into a proper sense of his infamy, and at the same time asserting his own forensic consequence. "Meant no offence, Sir," said the reprobate, "but as I thought we met as friends, and as Master Wattles has promised to come down well if you get me off, why I thought we might as well shake hands on the bargain."

"It is not necessary," said Mr. Crawley, with a new stock of dignity. "And now I think you have told me all? I hope so, because I can give no further time to see you; and therefore I hope, for your sake, I now know all? You understand me?"

Innocent murderer — unsophisticated assassin! He did not understand his best defender. Deceived by what he thought a cordiality of voice, a look of interest, in Mr. Montecute Crawley — and suddenly feeling that it would doubtless be for his own especial benefit if he laid bare his heart — that black, bad thing — before so able, so excellent a gentleman, Robert Willis' thought that he owed him every confidence, and would, therefore, without further ceremony, discharge the debt. "Why, no, Sir," he said, with the air of a man prepared to be praised for his ingenuousness, — "no, Sir, I hav'n't told you all. You see, uncle — I must say it — had been a good sort of a fellow to me in his time: but somehow, he got plaguy cranky of late; wouldn't come down with the money nohow. And I put it to you, Sir, who know what life is, — what's a young fellow like me to do with-

out money? Well, the long and the short of it is this, — I shot the old chap, and that's the truth."

If virtue could have peeped into that prison, could at that moment have beheld the face of Mr. Montecute Crawley, would she not have embraced — have wept over her champion — even as he had often wept on her account? He started from the confessed homicide, as though Cain himself had risen from beside him. "Scoundrel! monster! villain!" he exclaimed with passion, that must have been genuine, it was so violent.

"Bless me!" cried the prisoner. "I hope you're not offended. You wanted to know all, Sir."

"Not that — not that, miscreant!" and Mr. Montecute Crawley paced up and down in the very greatest distress. "Monster, — I leave you to your fate: I'll not stain my hands with such a brief. No — never — never."

"You'll not do that, Sir, I'm sure," said the murderer. "Too much of a gentleman for that. 'Specially when the Justice has come down so handsomely. And I know him; that's not all he'll do, if you get me off."

"Get you off!" cried Mr. Montecute Crawley with a disgust that did the very highest and deepest honour to his heart. — "What! let loose a wild beast — a man-tiger into the world. Monster — miscreant — miscreant!" With all Mr. Crawley's enviable command of abuse, he lacked vituperation wherewith to express the intensity of his loathing; and he therefore quitted the murderer with a look of inexpressible scorn; Robert Willis having, in his imagination, the very clearest view of the gallows, with himself in the cart, wending to his inevitable destination. He was given up by that

miracle of an orator, Mr. Montecute Crawley, and there was nothing left him but the hangman.

Ingenuous Robert Willis — unsophisticated homicide! Little knew that simple murderer the magnanimity of the lawyer, who would forget the imprudence of the blood-shedder in pity for the erring fellow-creature. Besides, Mr. Montecute Crawley, in his great respect for the intellectual cravings of the public, could not consent to deprive a crowded court of his expected speech: an oration that, as he knew, would impart very considerable enjoyment to his auditors, and, possibly achieve a lasting glory for himself. Therefore, possessed of the knowledge of the prisoner's crime, it would be the business, the pride of Mr. Crawley to array him in a garb of innocence: though, everlastingly stained with blood, it would be the fame of the orator to purify the assassin, returning him back to the world snow-white and sweetened. And, with this determination, when the day of trial came, Mr. Montecute Crawley entered the court, amidst the flattering admiration of all assembled. What a solemn man he looked! What a champion of truth — what an earnest orator in the cause of innocence — with every line in his face a swelling lie!

And the day of trial came. St. James sat upon the bench in close neighbourhood to the Judge. The court was crowded. Ladies had dressed themselves as for a gala; and when the prisoner — habited with scrupulous neatness — appeared at the bar, there was a murmur from the fair that at once acquitted so handsome, so finely-made a man, of such a naughty crime. It was impossible that with such a face — such very fine eyes — such wavy, silken hair, and above all

with such a self-assuring smile — it was impossible that such a creature could be stained with an old man's blood. And then the gentlewomen looked from the prisoner to the prisoner's counsel, and beheld in his sweet gravity, his beautiful composure, an assurance that he, that eloquent and sympathetic pleader, was possessed as with the consciousness of his own soul, of the guiltlessness of that oppressed, that handsome young man; and would therefore plead with the voice and sublime fervour of a superior spirit for the accused at the bar. Men of every degree thronged the court. The gentry — the yeomen — the rustics of the country; all prepossessed for the prisoner. And many were the greetings and shakings of the hand exchanged with the prisoner's kinsman, Justice Wattles, who tried to look hopeful, and to speak of the trial as nothing more than a ceremony, necessary to stop the mouth of slanderous wickedness. And so, restless and inwardly sick at heart and trembling, the Justice looked smilingly about the court: but never looked at the prisoner at the bar. The prisoner gazed searchingly at the jury, and his eyes brightened when he saw that Simon Blink, landlord of the Lamb and Star, was foreman of the twelve.

The trial began. One witness swore that on the evening of the murder he heard a gun fired; and immediately he saw the prisoner at the bar rush from the direction of Cow Meadow. The ball had been extracted from the murdered man, and found to fit a gun, the prisoner's property, subsequently discovered in the farmhouse. Every face in the court — even the face of Mr. Montecute Crawley — fell, darkened at the direct, straightforward evidence of the witness. He

was then handed over to be dealt with by the prisoner's counsel. What awful meaning possessed his features, when he rose to turn inside out the witness! What lightning in his eye — what a weight of scorn at his lip — what thunder in his voice, terrifying and confounding the simple man who had spoken a simple truth. Poor fellow! in a few minutes he knew not what he had spoken: his senses were distraught, lost: he would scarcely to himself answer for his own consciousness, so much was he bewildered, flung about, made nothing of by that tremendous man, Mr. Montecute Crawley.

"Answer me, Sir," thundered the indignant counsel; "were you never in gaol for felony? Answer, Sir."

The man paused for a moment. He had never been in gaol for felony — Mr. Crawley knew that well enough — nevertheless the question was put with such vehement confidence, that, honest man as he was, the witness was for a time unable to answer. At length he ventured to reply that he never had been so imprisoned: which reply he again and again repeated, warned by the counsel — as by the trumpet of judgment — that he was upon his oath.

"And you've never been caught poaching — come, I shall get something out of you? Speak up, Sir! Upon your oath — have you never been caught setting wires for hares?" roared Mr. Crawley.

"Never, Sir," stammered the witness. "Never caught in my life."

"Ha! you've been lucky, then, my fine fellow," said the counsel. "You haven't been caught, that's what you mean, eh?" And at this humorous distinction, Mr. Montecute Crawley laughed — the prisoner, out

thought, to lift a load from his heart, he demanded to be taken to the keeper of the gaol; and then — solemnly admonished by the prison chaplain — he narrated the terrible story that, in his hour of mad defiance, Robert Willis had told his fellow-prisoner. That confession made, St. Giles felt himself a wretch — a traitor to the man who had put the secret on him: he would have given worlds to recall the story told: it was impossible. He had told all. And in open court, he would be summoned to meet, eye to eye, the prisoner: would be made to rehearse a tale that should make that man, smiling so full of health and strength at the bar, a clod of earth. It was these thoughts that had cut themselves in the face of St. Giles: it was these thoughts that, like poison, struck a coldness at his heart; made him tremble, and look a most forlorn and guilty wretch, when called upon to tell his story.

He told all he knew. The prisoner at the bar had confessed to him that, stung by the unwillingness of his uncle to feed his means, he had killed the old man: at such an hour — with such an instrument. More: he had robbed him: and had hidden the dead man's pocket-book somewhere near Pinckton's Corner. The prisoner had dropt a ring — it had always been too large for him — as he feared, upon the spot where the old man fell.

And then St. Giles was cross-examined: anatomised, torn to pieces by the counsel for the prisoner. A very few minutes, and so potent was the scorn, the indignation of Mr. Crawley, that St. Giles stood before the court the vilest of the vile of men; a human reptile, a moral blotch: a shame upon the race of Adam.

The whole court looked upon him with wondering eyes — a monster of wickedness. And St. Giles felt the ignominy: it pierced him like a sword; yet with calm, unaltered looks he met the hatred of all around him.

And with the testimony of St. Giles closed the evidence for the prosecution. Twenty witnesses for the prisoner proved that it was impossible he could have been near Cow Meadow at the time of the murder; no: he was at a merry-making at the Lamb and Star. Again, every inch of Pinckton's Corner had been searched, and there was no pocket-book: another proof — if such indeed were needed — of the diabolic malice of St. Giles, who, it was plain, to cloak his own infamy with some small credit, hoped to destroy the prisoner. Mr. Montecute Crawley had been exceedingly moved by this tremendous evidence of the iniquity of man. Whilst cross-examining St. Giles, the counsel, touching upon what he termed the apocryphal pocket-book, had wept; yes, had suffered large round tears to "course down his innocent nose," to the lively concern of the court; and, more especially, to the emotion of many ladies, who wept in sympathy with that sweet man, that soft-hearted barrister.

The judge summed up the evidence; and the jury, after the pause of perhaps two minutes — their verdict was already smiling in their faces — through their ready foreman, Simon Blink, acquitted the prisoner. Robert Willis was — Not Guilty! What a shout rose from the court! It was in vain that the judge looked angrily around him: there was another huzza; another, and another. Friends and neighbours shook each

other by the hand; and all blessed the admirable Mr. Crawley, the excellent judge, the upright and most manly jury. The hubbub suddenly ceased: and wherefore? Men were touched into respectful silence; and why? Oh, the scene was most impressive: for Mr. Justice Wattles — an old and most respectable magistrate — entered the dock; and there, in the face of the world, embraced his innocent kinsman — folded to his heart the pure, the spotless, the acquitted. And then Robert Willis left the gaol; and the multitude without shouted their sympathy and gratitude.

St. Giles remained within the prison. His term of captivity was ended: yet, compassionating his misery, the governor would permit him to remain until night-fall, when he might depart unseen. Did he show himself in open day — such was the belief of the people of the gaol — the mob would tear him piecemeal. He had tried to hang an innocent man: would have shed the blood of the noblest creature in the county; and burning alive was a fate too good for him. And thus St. Giles was spurned and execrated. Shut up with felons, he was shunned by them as something monstrous; a demon, for whom they had no words save those of cursing and contempt. St. Giles, with a crushed heart, walked the court-yard. A few paces were tacitly allowed him by his fellow-prisoners; and he walked, in misery, apart from all. It was a beautiful summer's evening, and he paused, and with glassy, vacant eye, surveyed a swarm of insects dancing and whirling in that brief, bright world of theirs, a sunbeam in a gaol. "A gentleman wants to speak to you," said one of the turnkeys, looking contemptuously at the witness for the crown. "Come this way."

St. Giles obeyed the order, and entering the body of the prison, found there his former benefactor, young St. James.

"You are the man who gave evidence against the person tried to-day for murder?" said St. James.

"Yes, Sir; and I spoke the truth: the very words the man said to me, I —"

"It is no matter. I did not send for you on that bad business. You and I have met before? How is it that I find you in this place?"

"I had no place to lay my head in, not a penny, only what your honour's goodness gave me, to buy a crumb; and so for that reason, after I'd been hauled up, as they said, for killing a man that was afterwards found alive, they sent me here. But bless you, kind gentleman! for your goodness to me. I hav'n't been without doing wrong in my time, Sir, I know that: but the world, Sir, hasn't dealt kindly with me, nohow; it hasn't, indeed, Sir."

"Where do you come from?" asked St. James.

"I come, Sir, from" — and St. Giles stammered — "I come from abroad."

"And you are willing to earn honest bread? Is it so?" said his lordship.

"Oh, Sir!" cried St. Giles, "if I might only have the chance! But it's a hard case to put a man to — a hard case to deny a miserable cretur honest bread, and then if he don't starve without a word like a rat in a hole, to send him here to gaol. I say it, Sir; I've had my sins — God pardon 'em — but I've been roughly treated, Sir; roughly treated."

"I hope to think so," said St. James. "I may be wrong; but what I have seen of you to-day induces

me to trust you. I want to know nothing of your history; nothing of the past. All I expect is an honest future. If you can promise this, you shall enter my service, and so stand upright again in the world."

"I do promise, Sir — with all my heart and soul — with all" — but the poor fellow could speak no more; tears poured down his face; tears choked his speech.

"Here is money. Get yourself decent covering, and make your way to London. When there, present yourself at my house. Send this card to me, and I will see what may be done for you. Remember, I depend upon your good resolution, that I may not be laughed at for hiring a servant from a gaol." With these words, St. James quitted the prison, leaving St. Giles bewildered, lost in happiness. He glanced at the card, saw the name — the name of that noble, gracious boy, who had before preserved him — and the poor convict fell upon his knees, and with a grateful, bursting heart prayed for his protector.

Let us now for a brief space, shift the scene to the Lamb and Star. It was ten at night, and the house was crammed with revellers, all met to celebrate the triumph of injured innocence; to drink and drink to the attested purity of Robert Willis. What stories were told of his spirit, his address, his gallantry; how often, too, were curses called down upon the head of him who would have spilt such guiltless blood; how often did the drinkers wish they had St. Giles among them, that they might tear him to bits — yes, limb him for his infamy! And ere the night passed they had their wish; for St. Giles entered the Lamb and

Star, and called with the confidence of a customer about him. But who was to know St. Giles in the neatly-dressed, trim-looking groom — the tall, clean-faced looking young fellow — that took his mug of ale from the hands of Becky, and nodded so smilingly at her? True it is, the girl stared; the blood rushed about her face, and darting from the room, she cried to herself, "It is — it is! the Lord preserve us;" but Becky looked with womanly eyes, and so remembered the ragged outcast in the spruce serving-man. In a few moments she returned to the room, and whilst she affected to give change to St. Giles, she said in a low, agitated voice — "I know you — they'll know you, too, soon; and then they'll have your life; go away: if you love — if you love yourself go away! What a man you are! What brings you here?"

"Just this little remembrance," said St. Giles, "for you got yourself into trouble for helping me: just this odd little matter; keep it for my sake, wench," and he placed a little silken huswife in her trembling hand.

"Law!" said Becky, "I didn't do nothing for you that I wouldn't ha' done for any body else; still I will keep this anyhow;" and Becky again blushing, again ran from the room. At the same moment there was a shout outside the house of "Master Willis — Master Willis!" and loud and long were the huzzas that followed. The door was flung open, and Willis, frantically drunk, rushed in, followed by several of his companions who with him had celebrated the triumph of the day. Willis threw himself into a chair, and called for a "thousand bowls of punch" — and then he would

have a song — and then he would have all the village girls roused up, and would dance the night through.

Great was the respect felt by the landlord of the Lamb and Star for Mr. Willis: nevertheless, the tumult rose to such a height, that Blink, with bending back, and in the very softest voice, begged of his honour not to insist upon a dance so late at night. Willis, with a death-pale face — his hair disordered — his eyes stupidly rolling — glared and hiccupped, and snapped his fingers at the nose of the landlord.

“Now squire, do be advised; do, indeed: you’ll hurt your health, squire, if you’ve any more to night, I know you will,” said Blink.

“You know!” shouted Willis — “Mughead! what do you know? Yes — ha! ha! ha! — you’re a pretty conjuror, you are. You know! Ha! you were the foreman of the jury, I believe? A pretty foreman — a precious jury! And you found me Not Guilty! Fool! nincompoop — ass! Here, I want to say something to you. Closer — a little closer.” Blink approached still nearer to the drunken madman, when the ruffian spat in the landlord’s face; he then roared a laugh, and shouted — “That for you! I killed the old fellow — I did it — damn me, I did it.” And the wretch, trying to rise from his chair, fell prostrate to the ground; whilst all in the room shrunk with horror from the self-denounced homicide.

CHAPTER XVI.

“EVERY guest of the Lamb and Star bore away the confession of the assassin; and full soon scornful, loathing looks beset the path of Robert Willis. The gossiping villagers would stand silent, eyeing him askance, as he passed them. The dullest hind would return his nod and good-morrow with a sullen, awkward air. Even little children cowered from him, huddling about their mothers, as the gay homicide would pat their heads, and give them pennies. It did not serve, that Robert Willis with a roaring laugh declared the whole a jest — a drunken frolic just to make folks stare. It served not that he would loudly and laboriously chuckle “to think how he had made Blink shake — and how, with just a word or so, he had taken everybody in.” No; the confession of the murderer had sunk into the hearts of his hearers; the tale spread far and wide, and not even butts of ale — and Willis tried that Lethe — would drown the memory of it. And so in brief time, the miserable wretch was left alone with the fiends. A few, out of pure love of the liquor he bestowed, would still have doubted the blood-guiltiness of their patron; but even they could not long confront the reproaches of their fellows. And so, with a late and hesitating virtue, they wiped their lips of the murderer’s malt, and consented to believe him very bad indeed. Willis, as one by one dropt from him, grew fiercely confident; battling with brazen brow the

looks of all. Unequal fight! The devil is a coward in the end: and so, after a show of scornful opposition, the poor cowed fiend gave up the contest and Robert Willis went no man knew whither. A sad blow was this to Justice Wattles. That he should have spent so much money on so hopeless a creature! That he should have gone to the heavy expense of Mr. Montecute Crawley! That at so vast a price he should have saved his kinsman from the gibbet, — when the desperate fool had hung himself in the opinion of all men! It would have been better, far cheaper, to let truth take its course, — but then there was the respectability of the family! And yet, it was some poor consolation to the puzzled justice, that however a Willis might have deserved the gallows, he had escaped it: opinion was a hard thing; but at the hardest it was not tightened hemp. Nobody could say that a Willis was ever hanged. Truth, after all, had not been sacrificed for nothing; and that was some comfort.

In due course, the Kent waggon brought St. Giles to London. It was about five o'clock on a bright summer morning when St. Giles, with rapturous eyes looked upon the Borough. Yes, he had returned to his hard-nursing mother, London. She had taught him to pick and steal, and lie, and when yet a child, to anticipate iniquities of men; and then — foolish, guilty mother! — she had scourged her youngling for his naughtiness; believing by the severity of her chastisement best to show her scorn of vice, her love of goodness. And St. Giles, as the waggon crawled along, lay full length upon the straw, and mused upon the frequent haunts of his early days.

Sweet and balmy sweet such thoughts! Refreshing to the soul, jaded and fretful from the fight of men, to slake its thirst for peace and beauty, at the fountain of memory, when childhood seemed to have played with angels! What a luxury of the heart, to cast off the present like a foul, begrimed garment, and let the soul walk awhile in the naked innocence of the past! Here is the scene of a happy childhood. It is full of gracious shapes — a resurrection of the gentle, beautiful! We have lain in that field, and thought the lark — a trembling, fluttering speck of song above us — must be very near to God. That field is filled with sweetest memories, as with flowers. And there is an old — old tree. How often have we climbed it, and, throned amid its boughs, have read a wondrous book; a something beating like a drum at our heart: a something that confusing us with a dim sense of glory, has filled our soul with a strange, fitful music, as with the sounds of a far-coming triumph! Such may be the memories of a happy youth! And what, as St. Giles, with his face leaning on his propped hands, gazed from the waggon, what, seeing the scenes of his childhood — what saw he? Many things big with many thoughts.

Yes; how well he knew that court! Six-and-thirty hours' hunger had raged in his vitals, and with a desperate plunge, he had dived into a pocket. It was empty. But the would-be thief had been felt, and was hotly pursued. He turned up that court. He was very young, then; and, like a fool, knew not the ins-and-outs of the Borough. He ran up the court; there was no outlet; and the young thief was caught like a stoat in a trap. And now St. Giles sees the joy of his pursuer; and almost feels the blow the good, indignant

man, dealt as with a flail upon the half-naked child. Ay, and it was at that post, that his foot slipt when he was chased by the beadle for stealing two potatoes from a dealer's sack. — Yes; and opposite that very house, the beadle laid about him with his cane, and there it was that the big, raw-boned, painted woman, tore him from the beadle's grasp; and giving him a penny, told him with an oath to run for very life. Such were the memories — yes, every turning had such — that thronged upon St. Giles, gazing in thought upon his childhood days, from the Kent waggon.

And then happier thoughts possessed our hero. He looked again and again at the card given him by St. James; and that bit of paper with its few words was a talisman to his soul; a written spell that threw a beauty and a brightness about the meanest things of London. Human life moved about him full of hope and dignity. He had — or would have — an interest in the great game — how great and how small! — of men. He would no longer be a man-wolf; a wretched thing to hunt and be hunted. He would know the daily sweets of honest bread, and sleep the sleep of peace. What a promotion in the scale of life! What unhopèd felicity, to be permitted to be honest, gentle! What a saving mercy, to be allowed to walk upright with those he might begin to look upon as fellow-creatures! And as St. Giles thought of this, he could have fallen upon his knee on London stones, in thankfulness and penitence. Solitude to him had been a softening teacher. Meditation had come upon him in the far wilds: and the isolated, badged, and toiling felon for the first time thought of the mystery of himself; for the first time dared to look in upon his heart

— a look that some who pass for bold men sometimes care not to take — and he resolved to fight against what seemed his fate. He would get back to the world. Despite of the sentence that bade him not to hope, he would hope. Though doomed to be a life-long human instrument, a drudging carcase, he would win back his manhood — he would return to life a self-respecting being. And this possessing will beat, constant as a pulse, within him. And these feelings, though the untutored man could give them no harmonious utterance, still sustained and soothed him, and now, in London streets, made most hopeful music to his soul.

And St. Giles passed through old familiar places, and would not ponder on the miserable memories that thronged them. No; with a strong will, he laid the rising ghosts of his boyish days, and went with growing stoutness on. He was bound for St. James's-square, and the way before him was a path of pleasure. How changed was London-bridge! To his boyhood it had been a mass of smoked, grimed stone: and now it seemed a shape of grace and beauty. He looked, too, at the thousand ships that, wherever the sea rolled, with mute gigantic power told the strength, the wealth, and enterprise of England. He looked, and would not think of the convict craft, laden with crimes, and wrong, and blasphemy, that had borne him to his doom. He passed along, through Lombard-street to the Bank; and he paused and smiled as he thought of the time when the place seemed to him a place of awful splendour; a visible heaven, and then he thought who went for moneys there, "angels ascending and descending." And above all, what a glory it would

be for him — a fame surpassing all burglarious renown — to rob that Bank of England. And then he saw the Mansion-house; and thought of the severe and solemn Alderman who had sentenced him to Bridewell. And then St. Giles passed along Cheapside, and stood before St. Paul's church; and then for the first time felt somewhat of its tremendous beauty. It had been to him a mere mountain of stone, with a clock upon it: and now, he felt himself subdued, refined, as the Cathedral, like some strange harmony, sank into his soul. He thought, too, of Christ and the fishermen and tent-makers Christ had glorified — for he had learned to read of them when a felon in the wilderness, — and his heart glowed with Christian fervour at Christ's temple, — that visible glory made and dedicated to the purposes of the Great Teacher — most mighty in his gentleness, most triumphant by his endurance, most adorable by the charity that he taught to men, as the immortal link to hold them still to God! Could expression have breathed upon the thoughts of St. Giles, thus he might have delivered himself. He spoke not: but stood gazing at the church, and thinking what a blessing it was upon a land, wherein temples for such purposes abounded; where solemn men set themselves apart from the sordid ways of life, keeping their minds calm and undefiled from the chink and touch of money, to heed of nothing but the fainting, bleeding, erring hearts of those who had dwelt upon the earth as though the earth had never a grave. Yes; it was a blessing to breathe in such a land. It was a destiny demanding a daily prayer of thankfulness, to know that Christian charity was preached from a thousand and a thousand pulpits; to feel that the spirits of the Apostles, their

earnest, truthful spirits, (ere solemnised by inspiration), still animated bishops, deans, and rectors; and even cast a glory on the worn coats of how many thousand curates! St. Giles, the returned transport, the ignorant and sinning man; St. Giles, whose innocence of childhood had been offered to the Moloch selfishness of society, even St. Giles felt all this; and with swelling heart and the tears in his throat, passed down Ludgate-Hill with a fervent devotion, thanking his God who had brought him from the land of cannibals to the land of Christians.

And now is St. Giles aroused by a stream of people passing upward and downward, and as though led by one purpose turning into the Old Bailey. "What's this crowd about?" he asked of one, and ere he was answered, he saw far down at Newgate door a scaffold and a beam; and a mass of human creatures, crowded like bees, gazing upon them. — "What's this?" again asked St. Giles, and he felt the sickness of death upon him.

"What's this!" cried a fellow with a sneering leer, — "Why, where do you come from to ask that? Why it's king George's new drop, and this is the first day he's going to try it. No more hanging at Tyburn now; no more drinks of ale at the Pound. It's all now to be the matter of a minute, they say. But it will never answer — it never does; none of these new-fangled things. Nothing like the old horse and cart, take my word for it. Besides, all London could see something of the show when they went to Tyburn, while next to nobody can be 'commodated in the Old Bailey. But it serves me right. If I hadn't got so precious drunk last night, I'd been up in time

to have got a place near the gallows. Silence! There goes eight o'clock."

And as the hour was struck by the bells of Christian churches — of churches built in Christ's name, who conquered vengeance by charity — men were led forth to be strangled by men, their last moments soothed and made hopeful by Christ's clergyman.

There was a sudden hush among the crowd; and St. Giles felt himself rooted where he stood; with gaping mouth, and eyes glaring towards Newgate. The criminals, trussed for the grave, came out. "One — two — three — four — five — six — seven," — cried St. Giles in a rising scream, numbering the wretches as each passed to his place — "eight — nine — ten — good God! how many?" — and terror-stricken, he could count no further.

And then the last night's bacchanal next St. Giles, took up the reckoning, counting as he would have counted so many logs of wood, so many sacks of coals. — "Eight — nine — ten — eleven — twelve — thirteen — fourteen — fifteen. That's all; yes, it was to be fifteen: that little chap's the last. Fifteen."

Reader, pause a moment. Drop not the book with sudden indignation at the writer who, to make the ingredients of his story "thick and slab," invents this horror. No; he but copies from the chronicles of the Old Bailey. Turn to them, incredulous reader, and you will find that on the balmy morning of the twenty-third of June, in the year of our Offended Lord, one thousand seven hundred and eighty-four, fifteen human beings were hanged in front of Newgate: death-offerings to the laws and virtues of merry England. It was the first day, too, of the new drop; and the novel

engine must be graced with a gallant number. Fame has her laurels; why should not Justice have her ropes? There was, too, a pleasantry — the devil must joke after some such fashion — in trying the substance and capacity of a new gallows, by so much weight of human flesh convulsed in the death-struggle. And so. — great was the legislative wit! — there were fifteen to be strangled. A great example this to an erring, law-breaking world of — the strength of timber!

The Lords of the Privy Council had met, with good king George the Third at their head, to correct the vices of the land. There was death for the burglar — death for the footpad — death for the sheep-stealer — death, death, death for a hundred different sinners. The hangman was the one social physician, and was thought to cure all peccant ills. Horrible, ghastly quack! And yet the king's majesty believed in the hideous mountebank, and every week, by the advice of his Lords of the Council — the wise men of St. James's, the Magi of the kingdom, the starred and gartered philosophers and philanthropists — every week did sacred royalty call in Jack Ketch to cure his soul-sick children! Yea; it was with the hangman's fingers, that the father of his people touched the People's Evil. And if in sooth the malady was not allayed, it was for no lack of paternal tending, since we find in the Old Bailey Register — that thing of blood, and bigotry, and ignorance, — that, in one little year, in almost the first twelvemonth of the new drop, the hangman was sent to ninety-six wretches, who were publicly cured of their ills in the front of Newgate! And the King in Council thought there was no

such remedy for crime as the grave; and therefore, by the counsel of his privy sages, failed not to prescribe death-warrants. To reform man was a tedious and uncertain labour: now hanging was the sure work of a minute.

Oh, that the ghosts of all the martyrs of the Old Bailey — and, though our profession of faith may make some moral antiquarians stare, it is our invincible belief that the Newgate Calendar has its black array of martyrs; victims to ignorance, perverseness, prejudice; creatures doomed by the bigotry of the Council table; by the old haunting love of blood as the best cure for worst of ills: — Oh, that the faces of all of these could look from Newgate walls! That but for a moment the men who stickle for the laws of death, as for some sweet household privilege, might behold the grim mistake; the awful sacrilegious blunder of the past; and, seeing, make amendment for the future.

A few minutes, and fifteen human creatures, sanctified with immortal souls, were carcases. The wisdom of the king and lords in council was made manifest to the world by fifteen scarecrows to guilt, pendent, and swaying to and fro. A few minutes, and the heart of London, ay of the Old Bailey, beat equably as before. The criminals were hanged, cut down, and the mob separated only to meet — if it should again please the wisdom of the king in council — for a like show on the next Monday; Saint Monday being, in the good old hempen times, the hangman's special saint's day.

The sufferers were scarcely dead, when St. Giles staggered like a drunken man from the crowd. He

made his way down Ludgate-hill, and sick and reeling, proceeded up Fleet-street. He saw, he felt that the people stared at him; and the thought that he was an escaped felon — that if detected he would as surely rehearse the bloody scene, as surely as those fifteen corses scarce done struggling — seemed to wither him. He stumbled against a post; then, for a moment gathering energy for the effort, he turned up Shoe-lane, and entered a public-house. "A mug of water, master;" he asked of the landlord.

"It's a liquor we don't sell," said the host, "and I can't afford to give it away. Water! I should think a dram of brandy would be better for your complaint. Why, you look like a blue-bag. Got no catching sickness I hope? If so, be so good as to go to another house. I've never yet had a day's illness, and I don't intend to have."

"Nothing but a little faint, master. I passed, just now, by the Old Bailey, and — and it's been too much for me."

"Well, you must have a coddled sort of heart, you must. I should have gone myself, only I couldn't leave the bar; for they don't hang fifteen every day, and — why, if now you aint as white as if you'd run from the gallows yourself."

"Water, master — water," cried St. Giles, — "and for the brandy, I'll take that afterwards."

"Better take it first," said the landlord, "but that's your business. Well, I shouldn't much like such customers as you," he added, as St. Giles hastily quaffed the lymph. "Now, do take some of the real stuff; or, with that cold rubbish, you'll give yourself the aygur;" and the host pressed the brandy.

"In a minute; I'll just sit down a bit," said St. Giles, and taking the brandy, he entered a side-room. It was empty. Seating himself, with the untasted liquor before him, he again saw the vision that had appalled and rooted him in the Old Bailey. He could swear to it — it was clear to his eye as his own hand. All but himself had beheld fifteen felons on the drop, but he had seen sixteen; and the last, the sixteenth, was himself; yes, if in a glass he had ever seen himself. True; it was but a vision — but a vision that foreshadowed a horrid truth. He had escaped from captivity to be hanged for the crime. All the bright promises of the morning had vanished, and, in the bitterness of his thoughts, he already sat in the gloom of Newgate. Thus sunk in misery, he was unconscious of the entrance of a visitor, who, in a few moments, startled him with a greeting.

"Been to the Jug, mate? A cruel fine day to be hanged on, isn't it?" asked the new-comer.

St. Giles looked at the speaker, who suddenly recoiled from his glance, as from the glare of some wild beast. "Why, what's the matter?" asked the man. "Do you think you'll know me again, that you stare in that way? Perhaps, you do know me?"

"Not at all, friend; not at all; though coming suddenly, you startled me a little at first." But instantly, St. Giles recognised his old master and tempter, Tom Blast. Vice had cut still deeper lines in his wicked face; time had crowned him with its most horrid crown, grey hairs upon a guilty head; time sat heavily upon his back, yet St. Giles knew his early tutor; knew the villain who had snared his boyhood, making him a doomed slave for his natural life. Fierce

thoughts rose in the heart of St. Giles, as he gazed upon the traitor who had sold him; a moment, and he could have dipped his hands in that old man's blood: another instant, and he looked upon him with compassion, with deepest pity. The villain saw the change, and took new confidence.

"It's lucky times for you, mate, if you can tipples brandy. If I've had nothing but five-farden beer since 'Tuesday, may I be pisoned!"

"You may have this for me," said St. Giles, and he gave Blast the brandy, which the old knave greedily swallowed.

"Should like to meet with one o' your sort every day," cried Blast, smacking his lips. "Never saw your like afore."

"Indeed?" asked St. Giles, who, from the tone and manner of Blast, felt himself secure from discovery. "Indeed?"

"No, never. You couldn't tell me where I could see you to-morrow?" asked Blast.

"Why, where may you be found — where do you live?" questioned St. Giles quickly.

"Oh, I live at Horsleydown; but I so like the look o' you, mate, I'll meet you here," answered Blast. "I'm agreeable to anything."

"Very well," said St. Giles, "say twelve o'clock; we'll have another glass. Stay, you can have another now; here's sixpence for the treat. I must go; good bye;" and St. Giles was hurrying away, when Blast seized him by the hand, and whilst our hero shrunk and shook at his touch, swore that he was a good fellow, and a regular king. St. Giles, releasing himself, retreated quickly from the house, casting frequent

looks behind that he might not be followed by his former friend, whom, it was his hope, despite of the engagement of the morrow, never to behold again. Nevertheless, St. Giles had yearned to have some further speech with Blast. Half-a-dozen times the words were at his lips, and then the fear of the chance of detection kept him dumb. And then again he repented that he had not risked the peril, that he might at once have known the fate of his mother. He had heard no word of her. Was she dead? Remembering what was her life, he almost hoped so. Yet she was the only creature of his blood: and, if still living, it would be to him some solace — something to link him anew to her — to snatch her old age from the horrors that defiled it. With these thoughts, St. Giles took his way up the Strand, and feeling a strange pleasure in the daring, was soon in Bow-street. He approached the office: the judgment-seat where he was arraigned for his maiden theft. There at the door, playing with his watch-chain — with almost the same face, the same cut clothes, the same flower in his mouth, of fifteen years before — stood Jerry Whistle, officer, and prime thief-taker. A sort of human blood-hound, as it seemed expressly fashioned by madam nature, to watch and seize on evil-doers. He appeared to be sent into this world with a peculiar nose for robbers; scenting them through all their doublings, although they should put seas between him and them. And Jerry performed his functions with such extreme good-humour, seized upon a culprit with such great good-nature, that it seemed impossible that death should end a ceremony so cordially begun. Jerry Whistle would take a man to Newgate as to a tavern; a place

wherein human nature might with the fattest and the strongest enjoy itself.

As St. Giles approached Whistle, he thought that worthy officer, learned as he was in human countenances, eyed him with a look of remembrance; whereupon, with a wise boldness, St. Giles stepped up to him, and asked the way to Seven Dials. "Straight ahead, my tulip, and ask again," said Jerry; and he continued to suck his pink and chink his watch chain.

In a few minutes, St. Giles was in Short's Gardens. He looked upwards at the third floor; where his first friend, Mrs. Aniseed, had carried him to her gentle-hearted lord, Bright Jem. No: they were tenants there no longer. The windows, always bright, were crusted with dust; two were broken, and patched with paper. And there was no flower-pot, with its three pennyworth of nature from Covent-garden; no singing-bird. St. Giles, with a sinking of the heart, passed on. It was plain he had lost a part of something that, in his hours of exile, had made England so fair a land of promise to him. He turned his steps towards Seven Dials. He would look up at the shop of the muffin-maker: of course he could not make himself known — at least not yet — to that sweet-and-bitter philanthropist, Capstick: but it would be something to see how time had dealt with him. A short space, and St. Giles approached the door; the very threshold he had crossed with basket and bell. Capstick had departed; no muffin graced the window. The shop was tenanted by a small undertaker; a tradesman who had to higgie with the poor for his price of laying that eye-sore, poverty, in the arms of the maternal earth who, least partial of all mothers, treats

her offspring all alike. "Can he be dead?" thought St. Giles, for the moment unconsciously associating his benefactor with the emblems of mortality; as though death had come there and edged the muffin-maker out. Ere he could think another thought, St. Giles stood in the shop. The master, whistling a jig of the time, was at his work, driving tin tacks into a baby's coffin. The pawnbroker would have another gown — a blanket, it might be — for those tin tacks; but that was nothing: why should wealth claim all the pride of the world, even where pride is said to leave us — at the grave?

"Do you know whether Mr. Capstick's alive?" asked St. Giles of the whistling workman.

"Can't say, I'm sure," answered the undertaker. "I only know I've not yet had the luck of burying him."

"I mean the muffin-maker, who lived here before you," said St. Giles; "you knew him?"

"I've heard of him, but never seen him — never want. He was a tailor as was ruined last here. I say," — cried the undertaker, with an intended joke in his eye — "I say, you don't want anything in my way?"

St. Giles, making no answer, stepped into the street. He then paused. Should he go forward? He should have no luck that day, and he would seek no further. And while he so determined, he moved towards his native nook — the fetid, filthy corner, in which he first smelt what was called the air. He walked towards Hog Lane.

Again and again did he pass it. Again and again did he approach St. Giles's Church, and gaze upon

the clock. It was only ten; too early — he was sure of that — to present himself in St. James's-square. Otherwise he would first go there; and return to the Lane under cover of the night. He then crossed the way, and looked up the Lane. He saw not a face he knew. All he had left were dead; and new tenants, other wretches, fighting against want, and gin, and typhus, were preparing new loam for the churchyard. No: he would not seek now. He would come in the evening — it would be the best time, the very best.

With this feeling, St. Giles turned away, and was proceeding slowly onward, when he paused at a shop-window. In a moment, he felt a twitch at his pocket, and turning, he saw a child of some eight or ten years old, carrying away a silk handkerchief that Becky, in exchange for the huswife, had forced upon him. How sudden, and how great was St. Giles's indignation at the villain thief! Never had St. Giles felt so strongly virtuous! The pigmy felon flew towards Hog Lane; and in a moment, St. Giles followed him and stood at the threshold of the house wherein the thief had taken shelter. St. Giles was about to enter, when he was suddenly stopt by a man — that man was Tom Blast.

"Well, if this isn't luck!" said Blast spreading himself in the door-way, to secure the retreat of the thief. "Who'd ha' thought we should ha' met so soon?"

"All's one for that," said St. Giles. "I've been robbed, and the young thief's here, and you know it."

"A thief here! Mind what you're about, young man: do mind what you say, afore you take away the character of a honest house. We've nothin' here but

our good name to live upon, and so do mind what you're about." And Blast uttered this with such mock earnestness, looked so knowingly in the face of St. Giles, that, unconsciously, he shrank from the speaker; who continued: "Is it likely now, that you could think anybody in this Lane would pick a gentleman's pocket? Bless your heart! we're all so honest here, we are," and Blast laughed.

"I thought you told me," said St. Giles, confused "that you lived somewhere away at Horsleydown."

"Lor love you! folks as are poor like us have, you know, a dozen town-houses; besides country ones under hedges and hay-stacks. We can easily move about: we haven't much to stop us. And now, to business. You've really lost your handkercher?"

"'T isn't that I care about it," said St. Giles, "only you see 't was given me by somebody."

"Given! To be sure. Folks do give away things, don't they? All the world's gone mad, I think; people do so give away." St. Giles's heart fell at the laughing, malignant look with which Blast gazed upon him. It was plain that he was once again in the hands of his master; again in the power of the devil that had first sold him. "Howsomever," continued Blast, "if you've really been robbed, and the thief's in this house, shall I go and fetch a officer? You don't think, Sir, do you" — and Blast grinned and bowed his head — "you don't think, Sir, as how I'd pertect anybody as had broke the laws of my native land? Is it likely? Only say the word. Shall I go for a officer?"

"No; never mind — it doesn't matter. Still, I've a fancy for that handkercher, and will give more than it's worth for it."

"Well, that's like a nobleman, that is. Here, Jingo!" — cried Blast, stepping a pace or two into the passage, and bawling his lustiest — "Jingo, here's the gen'lman as has lost the handkercher you found; bring it down, my beauty." Obedient to the command, a half-naked child — with the very look and manner of St. Giles's former self — instantly appeared, with the stolen goods in his hand. "He's sich a lucky little chap, this is," — said Blast — "nothin's lost hereabout, that he doesn't find it. Give the fogle to the gen'lman; and who knows? perhaps, he'll give you a guinea for it." The boy obeyed the order, and stood with open hand for the reward. St. Giles was about to bestow a shilling, when Tom Blast sidled towards him, and in an affected tone of confidence, said, — "Couldn't think o' letting you do sich a thing."

"And why not?" asked St. Giles, becoming more and more terrified at the bold familiarity of the ruffian. "Why, not?"

"'T isn't right; not at all proper; not at all what I call natral" — and here Blast whispered in St. Giles's ear — "that money should pass atween brothers."

"Brothers!" cried St. Giles.

"Ha, Sir!" said Blast, taking his former manner, — "you don't know what a woman that Mrs. St. Giles was! She was a good soul, wasn't she? You must know that her little boy fell in trouble about a pony; and then he was in Newgate, being made all right for Tyburn, jist as this little feller was born. And then they took and transported young St. Giles; and he never seed his mother — never know'd nothin' that she'd got a little baby."

"And she's dead!" cried St. Giles.

"And, this I will say," answered Blast, "comfortably buried. She was a good soul — too good for this world. You didn't know St. Giles, did you?" said Blast with a laugh.

"Why do you ask?" replied the trembling transport.

"Because if you did, you must see the likeness. Come here, Jingo," and Blast laid one hand upon the urchin's head, and with the other pointed out his many traits of resemblance. "There's the same eye for a fogle — the same nose — the same everything. And oh, isn't he fond o' ponies, neither! jist like his poor dear brother as is far away in Botany Bay. Don't you see that he's the very spit on him?" cried Blast.

"I can't say — how should I know?" answered St. Giles, about to hurry off; and then he felt a strange interest in the victim, and paused and asked — "Who takes care of him, now his mother's gone?"

"He hasn't a friend in the world but me," said Blast.

"God help him!" thought St. Giles.

"And I — though you'd never think it" — continued Blast, "I love the little varmint, jist as much as if I was his own father."

CHAPTER XVII.

WITH many words did Tom Blast strive to assure St. Giles that the orphan boy had found a watchful parent in his mother's friend; and St. Giles was fain to look believably. He saw his own doomed childhood in the miserable, mistaught creature: he saw the wretch prepared to sell him, in due season, to Newgate shambles; and yet the passion, the agony that tugged at the transport's heart must be subdued: he must mask his hate with a calm look, must utter friendly words. "T was kind of you, mate, — very kind," said St. Giles, "to take such care of the young cretur. Well, good day;" and St. Giles coloured and stammered as he felt the eye of Blast was upon him — "we shall meet again."

"You never said a truer word," cried Blast, and he held forth his hand. St. Giles breathed heavily; he would rather have grasped a wolf by the throat; and then he took the hand that had all but fitted the halter to his neck. "We shall meet agin," said Blast; and the words, like bodiless furies, seemed to St. Giles to fill the air around him. He passed from the lane into the open street, and still they followed him; each syllable seemed a devil threatening him. "We shall meet again," rang in his ears, torturing his brain; and again he saw the ghastly horror of the morning; again beheld those fifteen corded wretches; again beheld the shadow of himself. He passed on, crossed the road;

the street was thronged; the hubbub of the day was at its height; yet St. Giles saw nothing but those pinioned men, and the preacher of Christ's word, in the name of his merciful Master, solacing sinners to be in a moment strangled by the warrant of a Christian king. He paused, and with his hand before his eyes, leaned against a wall; and piercing words in terrible distinctness fell upon him, — "I am the resurrection and the life." He started, and a few paces from him, in St. Giles's churchyard, he beheld the parish priest. The holy man was reading the burial service over pauper clay; was sanctifying ashes to ashes, dust to dust, amid the whirl of life — the struggle and the roar of money-clawing London.

The ceremony went on, the solemn sentences tuned with the music of eternal hopes; fitfully heard through cries of "Chairs to mend," and "Live mackarel." The awful voice of Death seemed scoffed, derided, by the reckless bully, Life. The prayer that embalmed poor human dust for the judgment, seemed as measured gibberish that could never have a meaning for those who hurried to and fro, as though immortality dwelt in their sinews. And that staid and serious-looking man, with upturned eyes and sonorous voice, clad in a robe of white, and holding an opened book, — why, what was he? Surely, he was playing some strange part in a piece of business in which business men could have no interest. The ceremony is not concluded, and now comes an adventurous trader with a dromedary and a monkey on its back, the well-taught pug, with doffed feathered cap, sagaciously soliciting half-pence. And there, opposite the churchyard, the prayer of the priest coming brokenly to his ears, is a tradesman

smiling at his counter, ringing the coin, and scarcely snuffing the Golgotha at his door, asking what article he shall next have the happiness to show? And thus in London highways do Death and Life shoulder each other. And Life heeds not the foul, impertinent warning; but at the worst thinks Death, when so very near, a nuisance. It is made by familiarity a nasty, vulgar, unhealthy thing; it is too close a neighbour to become a solemnity.

It has been held to be a wise, deep-thoughted ordinance of the Egyptians that at their banquets was served a skeleton, that, in its grim nakedness, it might preach their coming nakedness to all the revellers: that it might show their future outline of bone, when called to lay aside the fleshly garment, laced and interlaced with so divine a mystery of nerves that, subtle as light, conveys the bliss of being. And so was a skull made a moralist; and solemn were the mute exhortations falling from its grinning jaws; profound its comic teaching. For, apart from association, the expression of a bare skull has, to ourselves at least, little in it serious: nay, there has always seemed to us a quaint cheerfulness in it. The cheek-bones look still puckered with a smile, as though contracted when it flung aside the mask of life, and caught a glimpse of the on-coming glory.

And the Egyptians are lauded for their dinner skeleton. Indeed, at the first thought, it seems a notable way of teaching sobriety and good manners. Yet, could we come at the truth — could we know the very heart of the banquet, throbbing after an hour or so with hot wine, we should know, past dispute, how grievously the great Preacher Bone had failed in his purpose. We should hear of quick-witted Egypt-

tians making unseemly jokes at his gaunt nakedness; we should see one reprobate idolater of leeks capping death's-head with an empty bowl, even as a boy ventures a joke upon his sleeping schoolmaster. We should see another — a fine young Theban — spiriting wine in the cavernous eyeholes of Death, bidding him look double for the libation. But of these jests we hear nothing; we only hear of the wisdom of the whereabout of the skeleton, and nothing of the affronts that — we would almost swear to the fact — its familiarity with the living drew upon it.

And therefore — oh, legislators! — remove city churchyards from the shop-doors of citizens. Your goodly purpose has altogether failed. By huddling the dead with the living, it was doubtless your benign intention to place a lesson continually in the eyes of trading men — to show them how vain and fleeting was even a cent. per cent. profit — to prove that, however thumping the balance on the books, Death, with his dirty, grave-yard fingers, might any minute come and wipe it out. The thing has not prospered. How many hackney-coach stands have with the best intention been established near churchyards! For hours and hours the drivers sit and sit, with one eye upon the grave, and another on the pavement. And yet these men, so open to daily meditation — so appealed to by tomb-stone eloquence — these men are scarcely to be trusted with unweighed bullion. We speak within measure when we say that not above a hundred times have we heard of a hackney-coachman returning sovereigns which — in a moment of vinous enthusiasm — had been unguardedly tendered for shillings. No: we could swear it. Not above a hundred times.

And still St. Giles stood, listening to the burial service, when he felt something pulling at his coat-skirt. He looked round, and saw his half-brother, the precocious Jingo, lauded by Tom Blast, at his side. "I say," cried the urchin, with a wink, and pointing towards a spot in the churchyard, "that's where we put the old 'oman."

"What, — mother? Where?" cried St. Giles.

Jingo picked up a piece of broken tobacco-pipe from the pavement. "Bet you a pound," said the boy, "I'll hit the place. Why, jist there;" and unerringly he pitched the fragment on a distant grave. This done, Jingo nodded in self-approval.

Without a word, St. Giles entered the churchyard, and approached the grave; Jingo running like a dog at his side. "Poor soul! poor soul!" cried St. Giles; and then, looking earnestly down upon the clay, he added, "after all, it's a better place than the Lane — a better place."

"Bless your 'art," said the boy, "that's what mother said afore she come here. She called me to her, and said she was a-goin' to be 'appy at last — and then there was a man as read to her two or three times out of a book, and would read for all 'Tom Blast said he'd get him pumped on for coming to the Lane — well, when she talked o' being 'appy, the man said she was a wicked cretur to think of sich a thing. And then didn't the old 'oman wring her hands, and call 'Tom Blast sich names — and didn't she hug me like nothin', and scream out, and ask who'd take care o' me?"

"I'll take care of you," cried St. Giles, and he placed an arm about the boy's neck. "Be a good child, and I'll take care of you: I promise it — here I pro-

mise it; here, where poor mother lies. And you will be a good boy, won't you?" asked St. Giles affectionately, and tears came into his eyes.

"Oh, won't I though!" cried Jingo, plainly expecting some reward for his ready promise.

"I know you will — I'm sure you will," said St. Giles, patting the boy's head; "and now go home, and you and I'll meet again afore long. Herc's a shilling for you; and mind you take no more handkerchers." Jingo seized the money — ducked his head up and down — and in a moment disappeared in Hog Lane. "I'll save him from that devil, — as God's in heaven I will," cried St. Giles; and as though nerved with a good purpose, he walked sharply on. He had suddenly found in life a new responsibility, and with it new determination. With this thought he pursued his rapid way towards the mansion of St. James. With trembling hand he struck the knocker: again and again, harder and harder. Still the door remained closed: and then, to the fancy of St. Giles, the lion's head looked sneeringly at him, mocking his errand. "There's nobody at home," said St. Giles despondingly, and at the same moment the door was opened by a footboy, a most bright mulatto of about fifteen. There was an ease, a self-assurance in the youth, that proved him to have been born for the brilliant livery that adorned him. He seemed to have come into the world, like a parrot, to disport in gaudy covering. And thus, a very nestling, he had been fledged with the St. James's livery; for when scarcely six years old, he had been presented as a sort of doll footboy to one of the Marquess's daughters: like her pet pug, he was such a curious little wretch — such a pretty little monster.

His colour was so bright — his nose so flat — his eyes so sharp — and he had this advantage of the pug, his hair was so woolly. Had he been made of the best Nankin china — and not compounded of Saxon and negro blood — he had scarcely been more precious. Still, human toy as he was, he had this drawback from his humanity: Ralph — such was his name — grew out of the curious, he shot up from the squab Indian image into the lanky, loose-jointed youth. Could he have remained all his life under four feet, he would have continued a treasure; but he grew, and growing, was lowered from the eminence of his childhood to the flat walk of the servants'-hall. It was so pretty to see him — like an elfin dwarf from some Indian mine — tripping with prayer-book at his young lady's heels: but nature, with her old vulgarity, would have her way, and so, Ralph, the son of Cesar Gum, who was duly married to Kitty Muggs, who in good time duly buried her African lord, — Ralph, we say, was fast spindling into the mere footman. And he had ever had a quick sense of the rights of livery. It was a garb that, placing him in near and dear communication with the noble, by consequence elevated him to a height, not measurable by any moral barometer, above common people. He looked from under his gold-laced hat, as from a ladder, down upon the vulgar. His mother, the widowed Gum, would in her mild, maternal way remonstrate with her beloved child, on his unchristian pride; and when in turn rebuked, as she never failed to be, with exorbitant interest, she would comfort herself by declaring, "that it was just so with his blessed father, who was gone to a better place. He, too, had such a spirit." Little thought St. Giles, as he stood

confronted with that young mulatto — at the time with all his thoughts half-buried in a pottle, from which he fished up strawberry after strawberry, conveying the fruit with a judicial smack to his mouth, — little thought St. Giles that he stood before the only child of the negro Cesar who, in Covent Garden watch-house, had borne witness against him. As yet St. Giles had ventured no syllable of inquiry, when young Ralph, in his own masterly manner, began the dialogue.

"I say, if it isn't an uncivil thing to put to a gentleman, — how much might you have give the Marquess for this house? You couldn't tell us, nohow, could you?" and master Ralph sucked a strawberry between his white, paternal teeth.

"What do you mean, mate?" asked St. Giles, with a stare.

Ralph returned an astonished look at the familiarity, and then spat a strawberry-stalk on St. Giles's foot. He then continued "Why, in course you've bought the house, or else you'd never have made such a hullabaloo with the knocker. As I said afore, how much might you have give for it?"

"I ask your pardon, I'm sure," said St. Giles, "I thought at last everybody was out."

"Everybody but me — for kitchen-maids go for nothing — is. But what did you give for the house, I say?" again repeated the witty Ralph, laughing at his own indomitable humour.

"Lor, Ralph," cried a female head, hanging over the banister; "lor, Ralph, why don't you answer the poor man?" Saying this, the head for a moment disappeared, and then again showed itself on the shoulders of a fat little woman, who bustled down into the hall.

"Now, I tell you what it is," said the youthful footman, glowing very yellow, and holding up his forefinger at the intruder, "if you don't let me mind my business, you sha'n't come here when they're out at all, — now mind that."

"Ha! if only your dear father could hear you, wouldn't it break his heart! For the seven years we lived together he never said a crooked word to me, and Ralph, you know it. He *was* a man," said the widow in that earnest tone with which widows would sometimes fain convey a sense of value of the past invaluable. "He was a man!"

"I s'pose he was" — replied the filial Ralph — "you've said so such a many times: all I know is, I know nothing about him — and I don't want to know nothing."

"Well, if ever I thought to hear such words come out of that livery! Don't you expect that something will happen to you? Know nothing about your own father! When — only you're a shade or two lighter, for your dear father wasn't ashamed of what God give him to cover him with — only a shade or two, and you're as like him as one crow's like another." This Mrs. Gum emphatically clenched with — "And you know you are."

Master Ralph Gum turned a deeper and deeper yellow, as his mother spoke. His indignation, however, at his avowed similitude to his departed sire, was too large to be voluble through a human mouth. He therefore turned abruptly from his widowed parent, and angrily shouted at St. Giles — "What do you want?"

"I want his young lordship," answered St. Giles. "He told me to bring this," and St. Giles presented the card.

"Well, I can read this plain enough," said Ralph.

"And if you can," cried Mrs. Gum, "who have you to thank for the blessing but your dear father? Till his dying day, he couldn't read, sweet fellow; but he made you a gentleman, and yet you know nothing about him."

"You shan't come here at all, if you can't behave yourself," cried Master Ralph to his mother, evidently meaning to keep his word. Then turning to St. Giles, he said — "You'd better take this to Mr. Tangle."

"Tangle — a — lawyer?" cried St. Giles, with a quick recollection of that wise man of Newgate.

"He's at the Committee at the Cocoa-Tree: I dare say it's 'lection business, and he'll send you down — if you're worth the money — with the other chaps. I don't know nothing more about it," cried Master Ralph, perceiving that St. Giles was about to make further enquiry — "all I can say to you is, the Cocoa-Tree."

"I'm a going a little that way, young man," said Mrs. Gum, "and I'll show you."

"And mind what I say," cried Ralph to his mother, closing the door, and speaking with his face almost jammed between it and the postern, "mind what I say; if you can't behave yourself, you don't come no more here." And then he shut the door.

"Ha! he doesn't mean it — not a bit of it," said Mrs. Gum. "He's such a good cretur; so like his father — only a little more lively."

"And he's dead?" said St. Giles, not knowing well what to say.

"And I'm alone," sighed Mrs. Gum. "His father was a flower, that cretur was: he'd a kissed the stones I walk upon. He was too honest for this

world. He caught his death — nothing shall ever persuade me out of it — upon principle.”

“After what fashion?” asked St. Giles.

“Why you see it was in a hard frost; and poor soul! if there was a thing he couldn’t ’bide in the world, it was frost. He hated it worser than any snake; and it was nat’ral, for he was born in a hot place, where monkeys and cocoa-nuts come from — this is the way to the Cocoa-Tree. Well, it was a hard frost, and he was out with the carriage at a state ball at the Palace. He was in full-dress of course — with those dreadful silk stockings. All the other servants put on their gaiters; but he wouldn’t — he was so partic’lar to orders. Well, the cold flew to the calves of his legs, and then up into his stomach, and then — oh, young man! I’ve never looked at silk stockings that I hav’n’t shivered again. That’s the way to the Cocoa-Tree!” — And with this, Mrs. Gum, possibly to hide her emotion, suddenly turned a corner, and left St. Giles alone.

But he needed no pilotage: the Cocoa-Tree was well known to him; and with his best haste he made his way to its hospitality. Arrived, he enquired for Mr. Tangle, and was immediately shown into the presence of that very active legalist, who sat at the head of a table with a heap of papers before him. On each side of the table sat a row of thoughtful men, each with a glass at his hand, all convoked to protect the British Constitution, menaced as it was in its most vital part — a part, by the way, seldom agreed upon by those who talk most about it — by a candidate for the representation of the borough of Liquorish; an intruder upon the property of the Marquess of St. James.

The borough, time out of mind, had been the property of the family: to attempt to wrest it from the family grasp was little less felonious than an attack upon the family plate-chest. Twice or thrice there had been murmurs of a threatened contest; but now, on the retirement of Sir George Warmington from the seat, that his young lordship might gracefully drop himself into it, a plebeian candidate, with an alarming amount of money, had absolutely declared himself. Such audacity had stirred from its depths the very purest patriotism of Mr. Tangle, who lost no time in waiting upon Mr. Folder — with whom since the first Sabbath interview in Red Lion Square, he had kept up a running acquaintanceship, — and immediately offering himself, body and the precious soul the body contained, at the service of the Marquess. Mr. Folder had just the order of mind to perceive and value the merits of Tangle; and the lawyer was instantly appointed as the head and heart of the committee sitting at the Cocoa-Tree, for his young Lordship's return for — in the words of Tangle — his own sacred property of Liquorish.

"Well, my good young man," said Tangle to St. Giles, "you of course are one of the right sort? You come to give us a vote? To be sure you do. Well, there's a post-chaise for you, dinners on the road — hot suppers, and a bottle of generous wine to send you happy to bed. His lordship scorns to give a bribe; but every honest voter has a right to expect the common necessities of life."

"I've never a vote," said St. Giles, "nothing of the sort. I wish I had."

"You wish you had, indeed!" cried Tangle. "None of your impudence, fellow. What brings you here, then?"

"I've been to his lordship's house, and they sent me here. His lordship told me to come to him in London, and give me this card. He told me as how he'd take me into his service," added St. Giles with a slight shudder, for as Tangle looked full upon him, he remembered all the horrors of Newgate — all brought to his memory by that legal stare. Years had passed over Tangle, and save that the lines in his face were cut a little deeper, and marked a little blacker, his were the same features — the very same — that frowned on the boy horse-stealer in the condemned cell.

"Well, his lordship's not here," said Tangle; "and he's too busy now to attend to such raff as you. Away with you."

"Stop, stop," cried a low, whistling voice; and a gentleman with a very white, thistledown kind of hair, a small, withered face, and remarkably little eyes, called back St. Giles. "I suppose, my man," said the aged Mr. Folder, putting on his best possible look of vigour, and endeavouring to make the most of his shrunk anatomy, "I suppose, my fine fellow, you can fight? Eh? You look as if you could fight?" And then the querist chuckled, as though he talked of an enjoyment peculiarly adapted to man.

"Why, yes, Sir," said St. Giles, "I can fight a little, I hope, in a good cause."

"Upon my life, Mr. Folder," said Tangle, "the world's come to something when such as he is to judge of causes."

"But he's a stout fellow — a very stout fellow," whispered Folder to the lawyer; "and as I'm credibly informed that the other side have hired an army of ruffians — I even know the very carpenter who has made the bludgeons — why, we mustn't be taken by

surprise. I'm never for violence; but when our blessed constitution is threatened by a rabble, we can't be too strong."

Mr. Tangle nodded sagaciously at this, and again addressed St. Giles. "Well, then, fellow, if you're not above earning an honest bit of bread, we'll find employment for you. Besides, you may then see his lordship, and he may have an opportunity of knowing what you're worth."

"I'll do anything for his lordship, bless him!" cried St. Giles.

"There, now, none of your blessings. We're too old birds to be caught with such chaff as that. Your duty as an honest man will be to knock down everybody that wears a yellow riband, and to ask no questions." Such were the instructions of Tangle; and St. Giles, who had no other hope than to see his lordship, bowed a seeming acquiescence.

"You may get some refreshment," whiffled Folder, "and so be ready to start with the next batch. Mind, however, at least until the day of nomination, to keep yourself sober; on that day, why everything's *ad libitum*. When I say *ad libitum*, I mean that you will be expected to take the best means to defend our blessed constitution. And when I say the best means —"

"He knows, Mr. Folder; he knows," interrupted Tangle. "He'll drink like a fish, and fight like a cock; I can tell it by the looks of him:" and with this compliment the attorney waved St. Giles from the apartment; a waiter taking possession of him, and showing him to a smaller room wherein were congregated about a dozen minstrels, especially hired by Tangle to play away the hearts and voices of the

voters of Liquorish. Our blessed constitution was to be supported by a big drum, two or three trumpets, as many clarionets, an oboe, a fiddle or two, and a modest triangle. "There was nothing like music to bring folks up to the poll," was the avowal of Tangle. "Fools were always led by the ears. When they heard 'Hearts of oak,' they always thought they had the commodity in their own breasts — and never paused at the bribery oath, when 'Britons strike home' was thundering beside 'em. He'd carried many an election with nothing but music, eating and drinking, and plenty of money. Music was only invented to gammon human nature; and that was one of the reasons women were so fond of it." And animated by this forlorn creed, Mr. Tangle had ordered the afore-said minstrels to meet that day at the Cocoa-Tree that they might be duly transported to the borough of Liquorish. There was no doubt that musicians might have been engaged on or near the spot; but there was something tasteful and generous in hiring harmony at the mart of all luxuries — London. All the minstrels — Apollo is so often half-brother to Bacchus — were very drunk; and therefore gave an uproarious welcome to St. Giles. Brief, however, was the greeting; for in a few minutes the waiter returned with the intelligence that "the van was at the door; and that Mr. Tangle's order was that they should drive off directly; otherwise they wouldn't be at Liquorish that blessed night." Hereupon there was a clamorous order for a glass all round; the minstrels being unanimous in their determination not to stir a foot or strike a note in defence of the glorious constitution without it. Mr. Tangle knew his mercenaries too well to oppose such patrio-

tism; therefore the liquor was brought and swallowed, and the band, with St. Giles among them, climbed into the strange, roomy vehicle at the door; the driver, with the flame of brandy burning in his face, taking the reins. The horses, employed on the occasion, had evidently been degraded for the nonce. They were large, sleek, spirited creatures, prematurely removed from a carriage, to whirl a plebeian vehicle thirty miles from London, at the quickest speed. There seemed a sad, an ominous contrast between the driver and the beasts. He might continue to hold the reins between his fumbling fingers; he might maintain his seat; the horses might not, contemptuous of the human brute above them, cast off his government. Such were evidently the thoughts of the waiter as he cast an eye from the steeds to the driver, and then laughed as the wickedness of human nature will sometimes laugh at its inward prophecy of mischief. In that leer, the waiter foresaw the driver and the contents of the caravan suddenly weltering like frogs in a ditch.

"All ready, gemmen?" hiccupped the driver, trying to look round at his harmonious load.

"Wait a minute," cried the first clarionet, who was also the leader; "just a minute," and then he made his instrument give a horrible scream and grunt, whereupon he cried "all right," and burst into "See the conquering hero comes," his co-mates following him with all the precision permitted by rough-riding and hard drinking. And so they took their way from the Cocoa-Tree, playing beyond Shoreditch an anticipatory strain of triumph — a glorifying measure that was to herald the conquest of young St. James in the cause of purity and truth.

"I think we've given 'em their belly-full now," at length said the hautboy, removing the peace-breaker from his lips. "We needn't play to the green bushes," and the musician looked about him at the opening country. "I say," and he called to the driver, "I do hear that the other side isn't a going to have no music at all; no flags; no open houses for independent voters. A good deal he knows about the wants of the people. Bless his innocence! 'Thinks to get into Parliament without music!"

"Well, it is wonderful," observed one of the fiddlers, an old, thin-faced, somnolent-looking man, with the tip of his nose like an old pen dyed with red ink — "it is odd to consider what ignoramuses they are that think to go into Parliament. Why you can no more make a member without music than bricks without straw; it isn't to be done. Speechifying's very well; but there's nothing that stirs the hearts of the people, and makes 'em think o' their rights, like a jolly band."

"One bang of my drum," observed the humble advocate of that instrument, "sometimes goes more to make a Member of Parliament than all his fine sayings. Bless your souls! if we could only come to the bottom of the matter, we should find that it was in fact our instruments that very often made the law-makers, and not the folks as vote for 'em: my big drum's represented in Parliament, though I dare be sworn there's not a member that will stoop to own it."

"And my clarionet's represented too," cried the leader, advocating his claim.

"Yes, and my triangle," exclaimed the player of

that three-sided instrument, wholly unconscious of the satiric truth that fell from him.

"Capital ale here!" cried the driver, with increasing thickness of speech, as he drew up at an inn-door. It was plain that the county of Essex — or at least that part of it that led from London to Liquorish — was peculiarly blessed with good ale: for at every inn, the driver pulled up short, and proclaimed the heart-cheering news — "Capital ale here!" They were the only words he uttered from the time he had passed Shoreditch-church. Indeed he seemed incapable of any other speech: he seemed a sort of human parrot, reared and taught in a brewery, endowed with no other syllables than "Capital ale here!" And still, as we have hinted, the words grew thicker and thicker in his mouth; too thick to drop from his lips, and so they rumbled in his jaws, whilst he cast a hopeless look about him, despairing to get them out; yet at every new hostelry making a sound that plainly meant — "Capital ale here." Happily for him, according to his dim idea of felicity, he mumbled to quick interpreters. Hence, ere half the journey was accomplished, the driver seemed possessed of no more intelligence than a lump of reeking clay. He twiddled the reins between his fingers, and sometimes opened his eyes, that saw not the backs of the horses they tried to look down upon. But the brutes were intelligent; they, it appeared, knew the road; knew, it almost seemed so, the filthy imbecility of the driver; and so, with either a pity or contempt for the infirmity of human nature, they took care of their charioteer and his besotted passengers. True it is, St. Giles at times cast anxious looks about him; at times,

ventured to hint a doubt of the sobriety of the driver, whereupon, he was called a fool, a coward, and a nincompoop, by his companions, who considered his anxiety for the safety of his bones as an extreme piece of conceit, very offensive to the rest of the company. "You won't break sooner than any of us, will you?" asked the first fiddle. "Besides, you're too drunk for any harm to come to you." St. Giles was sober as a water-god. "A good deal too drunk; for if you knew anything — I say, that was a jolt, wasn't it?" — (for the vehicle had bounced so violently against a milestone, that the shock half-opened the eyes of the driver) — "you'd know that a man who's properly drunk never comes to no sort of harm. There's a good angel always living in a bottle; you've only to empty it, and the angel takes care of you directly: sees you home, if it's ever so dark, and finds the keyhole for you, if your hand is ever so unsteady. No: it's only your sneak-up chaps, that are afraid of the glass, that get into trouble, break their bones, and catch rheumatiz, and all that. Whereas, if your skin's as full of liquor as a grape's full of juice, you may lay yourself down in a ditch, like a little baby in his mother's lap, and wake in the morning for all the world like a opening lily."

The latter part of this sentence was scarcely heard by St. Giles, for the horses had suddenly burst into a gallop; the vehicle swayed to and fro, flew round a turning of the road, and striking against the projecting roots of a huge tree, threw all its human contents into a green-mantled pond on the other side of the narrow highway, one wheel rolling independently off. St. Giles, unhurt, but drenched to the skin, imme-

diately set about rescuing his all but helpless companions. He tugged and tugged at the inert mass, the driver, and at length succeeded in dragging him from the pond, and setting him against a bank. He groaned, and his lips moved, and then he grunted — "Capital ale here." The first clarionet scrambled from the pool, and seizing his instrument, that had rolled into the mud, immediately struck up, "See the conquering hero comes!" The first drum, inspired by the melodious courage of his companion, banged away at the parchment, but alas! for the first fiddle: the bacchanal good angel, of which he had but a minute since so loudly vaunted, had forsaken him at his worst need; and that prime Cremona was rescued from water, mud, and duckweed with a broken arm. He was, however, unconscious of the injury; and before he was well out of the pond, assured St. Giles that if he would only have the kindness and good-fellowship to let him alone, he could sleep where he was like an angel.

It was about ten o'clock at night, but for the season very dark. St. Giles, from the time that he could see the milestones, knew that he must be near the wished-for borough. It was in vain to talk to his companions. Some were senseless and stupid; some roaring bravado, and some trying to give vent to the most horrid music. Again and again St. Giles hallooed, but the louder he cried, the stronger the big drum beat — the more demoniacally the clarionet screamed. There was no other way: he would instantly seek the first habitation, that he might return with succour to the wet, the drunk, and the wounded.

CHAPTER XVIII.

ST. GILES had run pretty briskly for some quarter of an hour, when he discovered in the distance — glowing amid trees — a speck of light. It was plain, there was a human habitation, though away from the main road. He paused for a moment: should he follow the highway, or strike off in the direction of that taper? Another moment, and he had leapt the hedge, and was making fast for the beacon. He crossed two or three fields, and then found himself in a winding green lane: now, as he ran on, he lost the light; and now again, like hope renewed, it beamed upon him. At length he came full upon the homestead. It was an old circular dwelling; so thronged about by tree and bush, that it seemed impossible that any light within could manifest itself to the distant wayfarer. A type this, as it will appear, of the heart of the master. He affected a solitude from the world: he believed that he was hidden from his fellow-man, and yet the inextinguishable goodness that glowed within him, made him a constant mark for the weary and wretched. For a brief space, St. Giles considered the cottage. It was plastered with rough-cast; at the first glance, seemingly a poor, squalid nook. But a closer survey showed it to be a place where the household gods fared not upon black bread and mere water. The garden patch before it was filled with choicest flowers; not a weed intruded its idle life upon them. It was a place where

neatness and comfort seemed to have met in happiest society. St. Giles listened, and heard low voices within. At length, he knocked.

"Who's there?" said the master of the house. "If it's for the taxes, come in the morning."

"It's a traveller," answered St. Giles, "that wants help for a lot of poor souls that's tumbled in a ditch."

In a moment the door was opened, and a grey-headed, large-faced, burly man, with a candle in his hand, stood at the threshold. He warily placed the light between the speaker and himself, shading it, and with a suspicious glance looked hard upon St. Giles; whose eager soul was in a moment in his eyes; and then, trembling from head to foot, he cried, "God be blessed, Sir — and is it indeed you?"

"My name, traveller, is Capstick," said the man, bending his brows upon St. Giles, and looking determined to be too much for the stranger at his door; a new comer, it was very likely, come to trick him. "My name is Capstick, what may be yours? Here, Jem, you slug — do you know this pilgrim?"

Another moment, and Jem — old Bright Jem, with grey grizzled head, shrunk face, and low bent shoulders — stood in the door-way. Ere Jem could speak, St. Giles discovered him: "And you, too, here! Lord, who'd have hoped it?"

"Don't know a feather on him," said Jem, "but he seems to know us, wet as he is."

"Why, that's it, you see. A fellow from a horse-pond will know anybody who's a supper and a bed to give him. It's the base part of our base nature." And then the misanthrope turned to St. Giles. "Well,

my wet friend, as you know my name and Jem's, what mark may you carry in the world? What name have you been ruddled with?"

St. Giles paused a moment; and then stammering said, "You shall know that by-and-bye."

"Very well," cried Capstick, "we can wait." Saying this, he again stepped back into the cottage, and was about to close the door.

"Oh, never mind me," cried St. Giles; "I'll get on as I can; all I ask of you is to come and help the poor creturs: some of 'em dying with their hurts for what I know."

"Jem," said Capstick, "we're fools to do it; but it's clear, we were born to be fools. So, get the lantern, that we may go and bury the dead. Do make haste, Jem," urged Capstick with strange misanthropy; albeit Jem moved about with all the vigour time had left him. "How you do crawl — though, after all, I don't see why you shouldn't. What's people in a ditch to them who've a warm bed and a snug roof over 'em? Then as for dying, death's every man's own business; quite a private affair, in which, as I see, nobody else has any right to trouble himself. Now, do come along, you old caterpillar," and Capstick, staff in hand, stepped forth, Jem limping after him.

Whilst Capstick leads the way — a shorter one than that traversed by St. Giles — into the main road, we may explain to the reader the combined causes that have presented the muffin-maker and linkman as little other than eremites on the skirts of the borough of Liquorish. Mr. Capstick had turned his muffins into a sufficient number of guineas for the rest of his days, and therefore determined to retire from Seven Dials to

the country. Mrs. Capstick would never hear of going to be buried alive from London; and therefore resolved upon nothing more remote than a suburban whereabout. Hackney, or Pimlico, or Islington, she might be brought to endure; but no, if she knew herself, nothing should make her go and live, as she pathetically put it, like an owl in a bush. Capstick met all these objections in his usually lofty way: "she was a foolish woman, but would learn better." This, again and again he avowed; though no man had less faith in the avowal than himself. Still, it kept up his dignity continually to call his wife a foolish woman; albeit, he was generally compelled to yield to the folly he imperiously condemned. Matters were at this crisis, when suddenly Mrs. Capstick fell sick and died. "She would have been an excellent creature," Capstick said, "if it had not been her misfortune to be a woman. However, poor soul! she could not help that; and therefore, why should he blame her?" Very often, Capstick would so deliver himself, his eyes filling with tears, as he tried to twitch his lips into a cynical smile at all woman-kind, and at the late Mrs. Capstick in particular. "Still," he would say, "she had her virtues. Every day of her life would she walk round every one of his shirt-buttons that no one of them might be missing. He hated all tombstone flourishes, otherwise he would have had that special virtue — he meant the buttons — specially named in her epitaph. One comfort, however, he always had to think of: whatever his love was for her, he never let her know it. Oh dear no! It was like showing the weak part of a fortress to all comers: some day or the other 't would be sure to be taken advantage of."

And the death of Mrs. Capstick — the muffin-maker would never confess that for months he pined like a solitary dove at the loss — left him free to choose his abode. Whereupon he quitted London, and built himself a house almost buried in a wood some two miles from Liquorish; and this house, or hut, setting himself up as a sort of Diogenes — kind, butter-hearted impostor! — he called with a flourish, The Tub! The satire was lost upon nearly all the inhabitants of Liquorish, many of whom discovered, as they believed, a very natural cause for so strange a name. There was no doubt — it was urged by many — that Capstick had, in his day, made large sums of money by smuggling: hence, out of pure gratitude to the source of his fortune, he had called his cottage a Tub. Indeed, two or three of the shrewder sort dropt mystic hints about the possibility of finding, somehow attached to the Tub, an unlawful still. People — this apothegm clenched the suspicion in the hearts of some — people did not live in a wood for nothing!

Bright Jem had lost his cordial, good-natured mate, some four or five years before the death of Mrs. Capstick. He would, in his despair, tell the muffin-maker that “his poor Susan had somehow carried away his heart into her grave with her; he had no mind to do nothing.” Sometimes, too, he would borrow a melancholy similitude from the skittle-ground, and shaking his head, would exclaim that “he was a down pin.” To this sorrow, the muffin-maker would apply what he thought a sharp philosophy by way of cure. He would mean to drop gall and vinegar into the hurts of his poor and poorer neighbour — for, as Jem would often declare, Susan seemed to have taken away all

his luck with her — but he could deal in nought save oil and honey. Capstick flourished, and Bright Jem faded. Great and increasing was the fame of the muffins; but the link waned, and waned, and Bright Jem, weakened by sickness, almost crippled by the effects of cold, would have been passed to the workhouse, as he would often say, to “pick oakum and wait for the grave-digger.” This fate, however, was warded from him by the stony-hearted misanthrope, Capstick; by the muffin-maker, who, declaring that all men were wolves and tigers, would, at their least need, tend the carnivora, as though they were bruised and wounded lambs. Hear him talk, and he would heap burning ashes on the head of weak humanity. Watch his doings, and with moistened eyes he would pour a precious ointment there. For years it was the weekly practice of Capstick to visit Jem in his lonely room in Short’s Gardens, to enjoy a fling at the world: to find out the bad marks of the monster, or, as he would say, “to count the spots on the leopard’s coat.” Every Friday, he would come and take his pipe with Jem, that he might call all men wretches without having his wife to contradict him; when, having eased his bile and laid Jem’s weekly pension on the mantelpiece, he would return home with lightened heart to business. “The world’s a bad lot, Jem; a very bad lot: how it’s been suffered to grow as old as it is, it’s more than I can tell. Like an old block of wood, it’s fit for nothing but burning: God bless you, Jem.” And with this opinion, with this benison, would the muffin-maker commonly depart.

Capstick, however, when his wife died, resolved to carry Bright Jem into the country with him. “You’ll

be a good deal of use there, Jem," said the muffin-maker, when he broke the business.

"Not a morsel in the world," answered the humble linkman. "I've been used to nothing but London streets. I knows nothing that lives or grows in the country. Poor dear Susan could never teach me prim-roses from polyanthuses, though she knowed all about 'em. I'm a sinner, if I think I ever saw a cock-robin in all my life. What can I do in the country?"

"You shall learn to garden, Jem. That's the grand, the true employment of man," cried the muffin-maker, warming. "Why, here have I been for years an old rascal, grinning, and bowing, and ducking behind my counter to make money out of two-legged things as false as myself, — and do you call that the dignity of life? Do you call it truth, Jem? Now, real dignity's in a real spade; real truth's in the earth. She gives us profits — if we only deserve 'em — a hundred and a hundredfold, and there's no telling lies, no cheating one another to have 'em. They're a little different, Jem, to the profits we get upon 'Change. The earth, like dear old Eve, is always a mother to us; whereas when men deal with men, how often do they go to work like so many Cains and Abels, only they use thumping lies instead of clubs. I tell you, Jem, you shall be my gardener."

"I don't know an inion from a carrot, afore it's out o' the ground," said Bright Jem, showing, as he thought, good cause against the appointment. Capstick, however, overruled the objection, and so, in due season, Jem was housed in the Tub.

And thus, journeying across the fields to the scene of St. Giles's disaster, have we explained to the reader

the why and the wherefore of the sudden appearance of the muffin-maker and his friend.

Arrived at the place of accident, not a soul was to be found. The only evidence of the truth of St. Giles's story was discoverable in the overturned caravan, and the parted wheel. The horses as well as passengers had been taken on. Capstick took the lantern from Jem, and looked suspiciously around him. He then held the light to St. Giles, trying to read his face; and then he shook his head, as though baulked by what the misanthrope would call, the "brute-human hieroglyphs; the monkey, and owl, and dog, and fox, that lived in every countenance." St. Giles — he was wet as a fish — gave a slight shiver.

"It isn't above three miles to the Rose," said Capstick.

"Thank'ee, Sir; is it straight on, Sir? I can run there in no time, and a run won't do me no harm," said St. Giles.

"The road's narrow; the hedges are high, there's no moon, and you can't run very fast with a lantern," observed Capstick.

"I'll find my way, Sir, I've no doubt on it — straight on?" and St. Giles prepared to start.

Capstick laid his hand upon St. Giles's arm, and then said aside to Jem — "The poor wretch is wet as water. He may miss his road; may take a fever; not that that would much matter, for there's vagabonds a plenty in the world. Still — there isn't a great deal of you, Jem; and he's a slimmish chap — and, if you ar'n't very much afraid of your throat, I think for one night the fellow might turn in with you. We're wrong in doing it," said Capstick emphatically.

"Not at all," said Jem, in a louder note.

"Well, you Sir," cried Capstick to St. Giles, "let's go back again: you'll find this a nearer road to bed than along the highway." Saying this, the master of the Tub turned back towards his dwelling-place. "I can walk faster than you, Jem; so I'll push on;" and the muffin-maker mended his pace.

"We live here quite by ourselves, just like a brace o' ermits," said Bright Jem.

"All alone!" cried St. Giles, "where's your wife, then?"

"My wife! I don't know how you know'd I ever had one — my wife, dear cretur! is in one of them stars above us," said Jem, "and whichever one it is, this I know, it isn't the worse for her being in it," Jem paused a moment; and then, somewhat sadly, asked, "How did you know I ever had a wife?"

"Why," replied St. Giles, "you look as if you had; there's a sort of married mark upon some people."

"And so there is; a sort of weddin'-ring mark, just like the mark of a collar. I didn't know I had it, though; but here we are," — and Bright Jem paused at the Tub, and Capstick immediately came to the door.

"After all, I've been thinking you may lose your way, and as you're a little wet, why perhaps you'd better come in, and when we've had a pipe or so, we'll see what's to be done." Such was the hospitable invitation of Capstick. St. Giles paused a moment; whereupon Capstick caught him by the arm, and crying — "Don't stay there, wasting the candle," pulled him in. "Now, as we can't have any of your

wet rags drowning the place to give us all cold, you'll just go in there, and put on what comes to hand." With this, Capstick pointed to an inner room, which St. Giles obediently entered, and finding there various articles of dress — all of them more than a thought too vast for him — he straightway relieved himself of his well-soaked apparel, Bright Jem assisting at the change.

"You might jump out on 'em," said Jem; "but never mind that; a bad fit's nothin' to a bad cold: I know that, for I've had colds o' all sorts, and ought to be allowed to speak on 'em."

"Jem, get the supper," cried Capstick. "You sometimes eat, I suppose? You're not a cherub, quite?" and the cynic of the Tub tried to smile very severely at his guest.

"Thank'ee, Sir," said St. Giles, his heart warming towards his old benefactor; "I can eat up anything."

"Bad as our slugs, Jem," observed Capstick; "and they do crawl and crawl over our cabbages, like the world's slander over a good name. You may kill 'em, it's true; but there's the slime, Jem; the slime."

"Here's the bread and cheese, and all that's left o' the gammon o' bacon," remarked Jem, turning from the metaphorical to the real. There's one comfort, howsumever; the ale isn't out." And Jem authenticated his speech by speedily producing a large brown jug, crowned, as he said, "with a noble wig o' froth. There isn't a lawyer in all the land," added Jem, "with a wig like that."

"No," said Capstick, who had by this time lighted his pipe; "nor with anything like it under it."

St. Giles, having eaten, and tested the merits of the ale below the wig — which to his taste covered nothing false or vapid — looked around him with a look of large content. The hospitable cynic caught the glance, and despite of himself, smiled benignly.

"If you please, Sir," said St. Giles, who could have fallen at Capstick's feet, "I should like to tell you who I am."

"Not to-night," said Capstick, "I don't want to hear it. We're early people here, and the cock always calls us out of bed. Take another horn of ale, or one, or two, or three, and then suppose you go to rest."

St. Giles filled the horn; and then looking at Capstick in a way that made him turn round and round in his chair, for there was an earnestness in the man that he could not, by his own theory of human wickedness, account for, St. Giles cried, "God bless you, Sir!"

"Thank'ee, — that can do nobody any harm; whoever says it, and whoever it's said to. The same to you, and good night," and Capstick rose to retire to his sleep. As he leaving the room, he paused at the door, and said in a very loud voice, "You've loaded my pistols, of course, Jem?"

"Pistols!" cried Jem, with all his face all wonder.

"For," said Capstick, coughing, "I know the heart of man; and in a lonely place like this, pistols — double-loaded — ar'n't sometimes the worst things to have against it. Good night," and shaking St. Giles by the hand, Capstick stalked from the room looking tremendous sagacity.

"Shall I tell you who I am?" asked St. Giles, placing his hand on Jem's knee.

"Not to-night," said Jem. "It's the only thing that my dear Susan and me ever quarrelled about — not that we ever quarrelled — she was too good a soul for that — but I never could be curious. Now, somehow, women are so. If there's only a mouse-hole in the house, it's a relief to their mind to know where it is. Lor! when we talk of quarrelling! When she was alive, I always thought she begun it — not, as I say, we ever quarrelled — but now she's gone, it's me that seems the brute."

"And the wives of both of you is dead?" said St. Giles.

"Both in heaven," said Jem, with beautiful confidence. "Mrs. Capstick used to keep herself a good deal above Susan when she was here; but, poor thing! I dare say she's found out her mistake now."

"That's a place, depend upon it," said St. Giles, "where we make all these matters quite straight."

"No doubt on it," answered Jem; "but after all, it's a pity we don't make 'em a little straighter here. 'T would bring heaven a little nearer this world, wouldn't it?"

"Well," cried St. Giles, "'t will be all right at last."

"In course it will," said Jem. "Nevertheless, my good feller — for I think you are a good feller — why should we wait for the last to begin it? Will you have any more ale? It isn't often a stranger comes here."

"Not a drop: I'm full; and my heart's fuller than all my body. Let's go to bed," said St. Giles; and immediately Jem rose, and showed him to their chamber.

Hours passed, and St. Giles could not sleep. All the scenes of his long life — for how does misery lengthen life, making grey-headed men of mere maturity, compelling childhood, that should have beautiful visions, foreshadowing beautiful truths around it — to keep a day-book of the wrongs committed on it! — all these scenes passed before the wanderer. Such a nature knows the amount of life only by the balance of injury against it. And such — need we say so to the reader? — was St. Giles. Hence, young as he was, he was hoary in the hard experience of a sordid world. He lay, and counted year by year, nay, week by week, of his life — as first lighted by memory — and was melted by gratitude, by wonder, at the accident that had brought him beneath the protection of those who, in all his after vice, and after misery, had still made in him a belief in goodness; in the world's charity; in the inextinguishable kindness of the human heart. All his cares — all his anxieties for the future — seemed to pass away in the great assurance of his present fortune. And so he lay sleepless, bewildered with happiness. At length he slept.

The sun shone reproachfully into his room, as he was aroused by Bright Jem. "I say," said Jem, "will you come up, or will you take another pull atween the sheets? It's nicer in the garden, if you can only think so."

"To be sure," said St. Giles, "I'm with you in a minute." Hurrying on his clothes — he found them already dried and placed by his bed — he soon joined Jem in the garden.

"I can't do much of the rough work," said Jem, as he feebly managed his spade; but it's wonderful

how I've taken to the business for all that. When I think o' the years and years I lived in Short's Gardens, never knowing which side o' the world the sun got up — never seeing him get up — never hearing a bird whistle except in a cage — thinking there was hardly anything upon the earth but bricklayers' and carpenters' work, — well, I do feel it a blessing in my old age, that I can see the trees of a summer morning waving about me. I do feel happy with all things, seeing them to be so bright and beautiful, and brimming over, as I may say, with God's goodness."

"That's true, Jem — very true," said St. Giles; "and, I'm glad to see it, you look happy."

"As a butterfly," cried Jem. "And, Lord love you! when I sometimes think what I was in London; when I think o' the poor folks that's there now — the poor creturs that's as fine as may-bugs for a year or so, and then tumble, as I may say, in the mud, and get trod on by anybody, till they die and are no more thought on than pisoned rats, — well, I am thankful that I've been brought into this place to feel myself, as I may say, somewhat cleaned from London mud, and my heart opened by the sweet and pretty things about me."

"And you didn't know nothing of gardening, Jem, when you first come?" said St. Giles.

"I tell you, not a bit. But you've no thought on't how soon a man with the will in him, learns. I shall never forget what Mr. Capstick said to me, when we first come, and I didn't think I could take to it. 'Jem,' says he to me, 'a garden is a beautiful book, writ by the finger of God; every flower and every leaf's a letter; you've only to learn 'em — and he's

a poor dunce that can't, if he will, do that — to learn 'em, and join 'em, and then to go on reading and reading, and you'll find yourself carried away from the earth to the skies by the beautiful story you're going through."

"Mr. Capstick! He's a kind, humane cretur," said St. Giles.

"He's not a man," said Jem with emphasis; "he's a lump o' honey that would pass itself off for bitter allys. A lump o' honey! I often say the bees made him. Yes," and Jem returned to his garden — "you don't know what beautiful thoughts — for they're nothing short — grow out o' the ground, and seem to talk to a man. And then there's some flowers, they always seem to me like over-dutiful children: tend 'em ever so little, and they come up, and flourish, and show, as I may say, their bright and happy faces to you. Now, look here," and Jem pointed to a flower at his foot. "I sowed this last year — jist flung it in the mould — and you'd hardly believe it, it's come up agin by itself. You wouldn't think now," — and Jem looked suddenly professorial — "you wouldn't think it was a *Pimlico specissimo tulipum bulbum*?"

"What's that in English?" asked St. Giles.

"Ain't got no other name, as I know of; but there is no doubt it's a tulup. I didn't think I could do it," said Jem, with the smallest touch of self-complacency, "but I know the Latin names of half the flowers you see."

"Well, they don't smell no sweeter for that, do they?" cried St. Giles.

Bright Jem paused a moment; and then, with a

half-serious face, answered, "I don't know that they don't."

St. Giles felt no disposition to argue the point; therefore suddenly changed his ground. "Isn't Mr. Capstick late?" he asked.

"Late! he's never late," cried Bright Jem. "He's left the Tub these two hours. Gone for a walk."

"The Tub! What Tub?" asked St. Giles.

"Why, the house. It's called the Tub, after a tub that some wise man — as Mr. Capstick tells me he was — lived in a many thousand years ago. Mr. Capstick swears it was a vinegar tub."

"Well, that's droll," said St. Giles. "Call a house a tub?"

"Why not? But if you've anything to say against it, here comes the master." And as Bright Jem spoke, the early misanthrope entered the garden.

END OF VOL. I.

0140

